

# Against “Legalization”

Hakim Bey

As a writer, I am distressed and depressed by the suspicion that “dissident media” has become a contradiction in terms — an impossibility. Not because of any triumph of censorship however, but the reverse. There is no real censorship in our society, as Chomsky points out. Suppression of dissent is instead paradoxically achieved by allowing media to absorb (or “co-opt”) all dissent as *image*.

Once processed as commodity, all rebellion is reduced to the image of rebellion, first as spectacle, and last as simulation. (See Debord, Baudrillard, etc.) The more powerful the dissent as art (or “discourse”) the more powerless it becomes as commodity. In a world of Global Capital, where all media function collectively as the perfect mirror of Capital, we can recognize a global Image or universal *imaginaire*, universally mediated, lacking any outside or margin. All Image has undergone Enclosure, and as a result it seems that all art is rendered powerless in the sphere of the social. In fact, we can no longer even assume the existence of any “sphere of the social. All human relations can be — and are — expressed as commodity relations.

In this situation, it would seem “reform” has also become an impossibility, since all partial ameliorizations of society will be transformed (by the same paradox that determines the global Image) into means of sustaining and enhancing the power of the commodity. For example, “reform” and “democracy” have now become code-words for the forcible imposition of commodity relations on the former Second and Third Worlds. “Freedom” means freedom of corporations, not of human societies.

From this point of view, I have grave reservations about the reform program of the anti-Drug-Warriors and legalizationists. I would even go so far as to say that I am “against legalization.”

Needless to add that I consider the Drug War an abomination, and that I would demand immediate unconditional amnesty for all “prisoners of consciousness” — assuming that I had any power to make demands! But in a world where all reform can be instantaneously turned into new means of control, according to the “paradox” sketched in the above paragraphs, it makes no sense to go on demanding legalization simply because it seems rational and humane.

For example, consider what might result from the legalization of “medical marijuana” — clearly the will of the people in at least six states. The herb would instantly fall under drastic new regulations from “Above” (the AMA, the courts, insurance companies, etc.). Monsanto would probably acquire the DNA patents and “intellectual ownership” of the plant’s genetic structure. Laws would probably be tightened against illegal marijuana for “recreational uses.” Smokers would be

defined (by law) as “sick.” As a commodity, *Cannabis* would soon be *denatured* like other legal psychotropics such as coffee, tobacco, or chocolate.

Terence McKenna once pointed out that virtually all useful research on psychotropics is carried out illegally and is often largely funded from underground. Legalization would make possible a much tighter control from above over *all* drug research. The valuable contributions of the entheogenic underground would probably diminish or cease altogether. Terence suggested that we stop wasting time and energy petitioning the authorities for permission to do what we’re doing, and simply get on with it.

Yes, the Drug War is evil and irrational. Let us not forget, however, that as an economic activity, the War makes quite good sense. I’m not even going to mention the booming “corrections industry,” the bloated police and intelligence budgets, or the interests of the pharmaceutical cartels. Economists estimate that some ten percent of circulating capital in the world is “gray money” derived from illegal activity (largely drug and weapon sales). This gray area is actually a kind of free-floating frontier for Global Capital itself, a small wave that precedes the big wave and provides its “sense of direction.” (For example gray money or “offshore” capital is always the first to migrate from depressed markets to thriving markets.) “War is the health of the State” as Randolph Bourne once said — but war is no longer so profitable as in the old days of booty, tribute and chattel slavery. Economic war increasingly takes its place, and the Drug War is an almost “pure” form of economic war. And since the Neo-liberal State has given up so much power to corporations and “markets” since 1989, it might justly be said that the War on Drugs constitutes the “health” of Capital itself.

From this perspective, reform and legalization would clearly be doomed to failure for deep “infrastructural” reasons, and therefore all agitation for reform would constitute wasted effort — a tragedy of misdirected idealism. Global Capital cannot be “reformed” because all reformation is deformed when the form itself is distorted in its very essence. Agitation for reform is allowed so that an image of free speech and permitted dissidence can be maintained, but reform itself is never permitted. Anarchists and Marxists were right to maintain that the structure itself must be changed, not merely its secondary characteristics. Unfortunately the “movement of the social” itself seems to have failed, and even its deep underlying structures must now be “re-invented” almost from scratch. The War on Drugs is going to go on. Perhaps we should consider how to act as warriors rather than reformers. Nietzsche says somewhere that he has no interest in overthrowing the stupidity of the law, since such reform would leave nothing for the “free spirit” to accomplish — nothing to “overcome.” I wouldn’t go so far as to recommend such an “immoral” and starkly existentialist position. But I do think we could do with a dose of stoicism.

Beyond (or aside from) economic considerations, the ban on (some) psychotropics can also be considered from a “shamanic” perspective. Global Capital and universal Image seem able to absorb almost any “outside” and transform it into an area of commodification and control. But somehow, for some strange reason, Capital appears unable or unwilling to absorb the entheogenic dimension. It *persists* in making war on mind-altering or transformative substance, rather than attempting to “co-opt” and hegemonize their power.

In other words it would seem that some sort of authentic power is at stake here. Global Capital reacts to this power with the same basic strategy as the Inquisition — by attempting to suppress it from the outside rather than control it from within. (“Project MKULTRA” was the government’s secret attempt to penetrate the occult interior of psychotropism- — it appears to have failed miserably.) In a world that has abolished the Outside by the triumph of the Image, it seems that

at least one “outside” nevertheless persists. Power can deal with this outside only as a form of the unconscious, i.e., by suppression rather than realization. But this leaves open the possibility that those who manage to attain “direct awareness” of this power might actually be able to wield it and implement it. If “entheogenic neo-shamanism” (or whatever you want to call it) *cannot* be betrayed and absorbed into the power-structure of the Image, then we may hypothesize that it represents a genuine Other, a viable alternative to the “one world” of triumphant Capital. It is (or could be) *our* source of power.

The “Magic of the State” (as M. Taussig calls it), which is also the magic of Capital itself, consists of social control through the manipulation of symbols. This is attained through mediation, including the ultimate medium, money as hieroglyphic text, money as pure Imagination as “social fiction” or mass hallucination. This *real illusion* has taken the place of both religion and ideology as delusionary sources of social power. This power therefore possesses (or is possessed by) a secret goal; that *all* human relations be defined according to this hieroglyphic mediation, this “magic.” But neo-shamanism proposes with all seriousness that *another* magic may exist, an effective mode of consciousness that cannot be hexed by the sign of the commodity. If this were so, it would help explain why the Image appears unable or unwilling to deal “rationally” with the “issue of drugs.” In fact, a *magical analysis of power* might emerge from the observed fact of this radical incompatibility of the Global Imaginaire and shamanic consciousness.

In such a case, what could *our* power consist of in actual empirical terms? I am far from proposing that “winning” the War on Drugs would somehow constitute The Revolution — or even that “shamanic power” could contest the magic of the State in any strategic manner. Clearly however the very existence of entheogenism as a true *difference* — in a world where true difference is denied — marks the historic validity of an Other, of an authentic Outside. In the (unlikely) event of legalization, this Outside would be breached, entered, colonized, betrayed, and turned into sheer simulation. A major source of *initiation*, still accessible in a world apparently devoid of mystery and of will, would be dissolved into empty representation, a pseudo-rite of passage into the timeless/spaceless enclosure of the Image. In short, we would have sacrificed our potential power to the ersatz reform of legalization, and we would win nothing thereby but the simulacrum of tolerance at the expense of the triumph of Control.

Again: I have no idea what our strategy *shall be*. I believe however that the time has come to admit that a tactics of mere contingency can no longer sustain us. “Permitted dissent” has become an empty category, and reform merely a mask for recuperation. The more we struggle on “their” terms the more we lose. The drug legalization movement has never won a single battle. Not in America anyway — and America is the “sole superpower” of Global Capital. We boast of our outlaw status as outsiders or marginals, as guerilla ontologists; why then, do we continually beg for authenticity and validation (either as “reward” or as “punishment”) from authority? What good would it do us if we were to be granted this status, this “legality”?

The Reform movement has upheld true rationality and it has championed real human values. Honor where honor is due. Given the profound failure of the movement however, might it not be timely to say a few words for the irrational, for the irreducible wildness of shamanism, and even a single word for the values of the warrior? “Not peace, but a sword.”

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Hakim Bey  
Against "Legalization"

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# Crisis of Meaning

Hakim Bey

2001

A few days after the event, the New York Times ran an interesting article on the advertising “industry” and its crisis. Not only zillions of dollars a day etc. etc., but a weird effect: suddenly it seems impossible to have advertising at all. It seems massively “inappropriate” to move product as per usual with shrieking & insinuating, mocking & sneering, prurience & peeping; with hate & envy masked as fashion, with greed thinly disguised as freedom of choice.

Death and tragedy occur every day, every minute, not only in the former Third World, even in New York, even in America. Why hasn’t advertising ever seemed shameful to anyone ever before? The media — which cannot utter a sound without puking up a cliché — speaks now of the waking of a sleeping giant (meaning that we will no longer terrorism etc.) — but what was this sleep? And what does it mean to wake into a feeling of shame?

Last week, it seems we were willing to admit that our highest social values could be expressed in price codes (the “mark of the Beast” as the cranks say, the “prophets of doom”). This week, we feel shame. In a Times interview a fashion designer expressed doubt that her work had any significance and wondered if she could go with it.

The fashion industry is also ashamed; Hollywood is ashamed; even the news media expressed some fleeting longing for decorum & dignity & decency.

Are we supposed to feel this shame over our triviality, our meanspiritedness, our PoMo irony, our consumer frenzy, our hatred of the body and of all nature, our obsession with gadgetry & “information”, our degraded pop culture, our vapid or morbid art & lit, & so on & so on? — or should we defend all this as “freedom” and our “way of life”?

Our leaders are telling us to return to normal routines (after a decent period of mourning) in the assurance that they will assign significance to the event, they will embody our hate & desire for revenge, they will mediate for us with the forces of “evil”. But what exactly is this normal life to consist of? Why do we feel this shame?

Schoolchildren (again according to the Times) ask their teachers what it means that the terrorists were willing to die, to kill themselves; and their teachers evade the question, saying that “we don’t understand.” And the ad execs, they don’t understand either — they’re bewildered. Awake but confused by a crisis of meaning. Last week all meanings could be expressed in terms of money. Why should 5000 murders change the meaning of meaning?

A hyper-fashionable Italian clothing company uses death to sell its products. Photographs — even huge billboards — showing people dying of AIDS or waiting to be executed — designed to sell woolly jumpers. In this life as normal? Should we return to it?

For a few days no music was heard in the streets. No thumping bass speakers rattled the air, no chants of hate for women & queers, no “Madison Avenue Choirs” hymning the celestial delites of commodities or vacations in the midst of other peoples’ misery.

For a few hours or days there appeared no official spin on the event, no slogan/logo in the media, no interpretation, no meaning. We watched the cloud drift around the city, first to the East over Brooklyn then up the west side of Manhattan, finally over the east side as well. With the smell and the poisonous haze around the moon came a nightmare about the occult significance of the cloud: — angry bewildered ghosts in a vast white cloud. And we breathed that cloud into us. We’ll never get it out of our lungs. What the cloud wanted was an explanation, a meaning.

But next day the spin was in, the media had found or been given its a ndreds who died trying to save thenswer — “Attack On America”, our freedom, our values, our way of life, carried out by “cowards” who were nevertheless not “physical cowards” (as some official explained in the Times). Perhaps they were moral cowards? He didn e our faculty and students of colo’t say.

Why do they hate us? A few people have asked but received no coherent answer. Do “they” hate “us” because we use of 75% of the world’s resources even though we only constitute 20% of its population? because we bomb Baghdad & Belgrade without risking even one American life? because we export a vapid sneering meanspirited culture to the world, video games about death, movies about death, TV shows about death, commodities that are dead, music that kills the spirit? because we’ve made advertising copy our highest artform? because we define “freedom” as our freedom to rule & be ruled by money?

The politicians have told that “they” envy us and our way of life and therefore wish to destroy it. Envy — yes, why not? The whole system of global capital is based on envy. It has to be. No envy, no desire. No desire, no reason to spend. No reason to spend, implosion of global capital, q.e.d. But then why should the ad execs & fashion designers & sports teams & entertainers feel this strange unaccountable shame?

And why should the terrorists have been willing to die just because they envy our wealth & our way of life & our freedom to buy, and spend, and waste? What does it mean?

After the Holocaust (or Hiroshima, or the Gulag) certain philosophers said that there could be no more art or poetry. But they were wrong apparently. We have poetry again. It may not mean the same thing it meant before. It may not mean anything. But we have it. And who could have dreamed at the gate of Buchenwald or Treblinka that one day we would have — Nike ads or sitcoms about lawyers?

Is any meaning going to emerge from the 9/11 event? Without meaning tragedy ends not in catharsis but simply depression, endless sorrow. Our leaders “seek closure” — perhaps by killing many Afghan children — perhaps by a new Crusade against the Saracens — and of course by a return to normal. We’ll show “them” — by refusing meaning. We will sleep because it is our right not to awake to confusion & shame.

Our sleep will be troubled. We’ll have to “sacrifice a few freedoms” to protect Freedom. We’ll have to fear & hate. But within a few weeks or months we will have buried even the fear & hate, rather we will have transformed all that emotion to the Image, to the Evil Eye of the media, our externalized unconscious. We’ll have sitcoms again and gangster rap and arguments about our right to download it all for free into our home computers. We’ll get those airplanes flying, once

again polluting “our” skies with noise & carcinogens. We’ll overcome our shame. And that will constitute our revenge. That will be our meaning. Our morality.

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Hakim Bey  
Crisis of Meaning  
2001

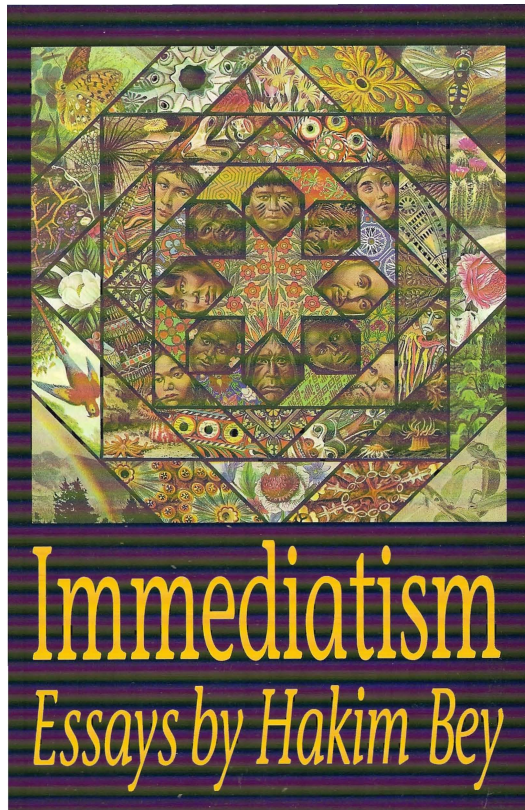
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# Immediatism

Hakim Bey



1994

# Contents

<b>Ontological Anarchy In a Nutshell</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Immediatism</b>	<b>7</b>
i. . . . .	7
ii. . . . .	7
iii. . . . .	7
iv. . . . .	7
v. . . . .	7
vi. . . . .	8
vii. . . . .	8
viii. . . . .	8
ix. . . . .	9
x. . . . .	9
xi. . . . .	9
xii. . . . .	9
xiii. . . . .	9
xiv. . . . .	10
xvi. . . . .	10
xvii. . . . .	10
<b>The Tong</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Immediatism vs. Capitalism</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Involution</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Imagination</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Lascaux</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Vernissage</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>“Raw Vision”</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>An Immediatist Potlatch</b>	<b>31</b>
i. . . . .	31
ii. . . . .	31
iii. . . . .	31
iv. . . . .	31
v. . . . .	32

vi. . . . .	32
vii. . . . .	32
viii. . . . .	32
ix. . . . .	32
<b>Silence</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Critique of the Listener</b>	<b>36</b>

# Ontological Anarchy In a Nutshell

Since absolutely nothing can be predicated with any real certainty as to the “true nature of things”, all projects (as Nietzsche says) can only be “founded on nothing.” And yet *there must be a project*—if only because we ourselves resist being categorized as “nothing.” Out of nothing we will make something: the Uprising, the revolt against everything which proclaims: “The Nature of Things is such-&-such.” We disagree, we are unnatural, we are less than nothing in the eyes of the Law—Divine Law, Natural Law, or Social Law—take your pick. Out of nothing we will imagine our *values*, and by this act of invention we shall live.

As we mediate on the *nothing* we notice that although it cannot be de-fined, nevertheless paradoxically we *can* say something about it (even if only metaphorically):—it appears to be a “chaos.” Both as ancient myth and as “new science”, chaos lies at the heart of our project. The great serpent (Tiamat, Python, Leviathan), Hesiod’s primal Chaos, presides over the vast long dreaming of the Paleolithic—before all kings, priests, agents of Order, History, Hierarchy, Law. “Nothing” begins to take on a face—the smooth, featureless egg- or gourd-visage of Mr. Hun-Tun, chaos-as-becoming, chaos-as-excess, the generous outpouring of nothing into something.

In effect, chaos is life. All mess, all riot of color, all protoplasmic urgency, all *movement*—is chaos. From this point of view, Order appears as death, cessation, crystallization, alien silence.

Anarchists have been claiming for years that “anarchy is not chaos.” Even anarchism seems to want a *natural law*, an inner and innate morality in matter, an entelechy or purpose-of-being. (No better than Christians in this respect, or so Nietzsche believed—radical only in the depth of their *resentment*.) Anarchism says that “the state should be abolished” only to institute a new more radical form of order in its place. Ontological Anarchy however replies that no “state” can “exist” in chaos, that all ontological claims are spurious except the claim of chaos (which however is undetermined), and therefore that governance of any sort is impossible. “Chaos never died.” Any form of “order” which we have not imagined and produced directly and spontaneously in sheer “existential freedom” for our own celebratory purposes—is an illusion.

Of course, illusions can kill. Images of punishment haunt the sleep of Order. Ontological Anarchy proposes that we wake up, and create our own day—even in the shadow of the State, that pustulant giant who sleeps, and whose dreams of Order metastatize as spasms of spectacular violence.

The only force significant enough to facilitate our act of creation seems to be desire, or as Charles Fourier called it, “Passion.” Just as Chaos and Eros (along with Earth and Old Night) are Hesiod’s first deities, so too no human endeavor occurs outside their cosmogeneous circle of attraction.

The logic of Passion leads to the conclusion that all “states” are impossible, all “orders” illusory, except those of desire. No being, only becoming—hence the only viable government is that of love, or “attraction.” Civilization merely hides from itself—behind a thin static scrim of rationality—the truth that only desire creates values. And so the values of Civilization are based on the denial of desire.

Capitalism, which claims to produce Order by means of the reproduction of desire, in fact originates in the production of *scarcity*, and only reproduce itself in unfulfillment, negation, and alienation. As the Spectacle disintegrates (like a malfunctioning VR program) it reveals the fleshless bones of the Commodity. Like those tranced travelers in Irish fairy tales who visit the Other-world and seem to dine on supernatural delicacies, we wake in a bleary dawn with ashes in our mouths.

Individual vs. Group—Self vs. Other—a false dichotomy propagated through the Media of Control, and above all through language. Hermes—the Angel—the medium is the Messenger. All forms of communicativeness should be angelic—language itself should be angelic—a kind of divine chaos. Instead it is infected with a self-replicating virus, an infinite crystal of separation, the *grammar* which prevents us from killing Nobodaddy once and for all.

Self and Other complement and complete one another. There is no Absolute Category, no Ego, no Society—but only a chaotically complex web of relation—and the “Strange Attractor”, *attraction itself*, which evokes resonances and patterns in the flow of becoming.

Values arise from this turbulence, values which are based on abundance rather than scarcity, the gift rather than the commodity, and on the synergistic and mutual enhancement of individual and group;—values which are in every way the opposite of the morality and ethics of Civilization, because they have to do with life rather than death.

“Freedom is a psycho-kinetic skill”—not an abstract noun. A process, not a “state”—a movement, not a form of governance. The Land of the Dead knows that perfect Order from which the organic and animate shrink in horror—which explains why the Civilization of Slippage is more than half in love with easeful death. From Babylon and Egypt to the 20th Century, the architecture of Power can never quite be distinguished from the tumuli of the necropolis.

Nomadism, and the Uprising, provide us with possible models for an “everyday life” of Ontological Anarchy. The crystalline perfections of Civilization and Revolution cease to interest us when we have experienced them both as forms of War, variations on that tired old Babylonian Con, the myth of Scarcity. Like the bedouin we choose an architecture of skins—and an earth full of places of disappearance. Like the Commune, we choose a liquid space of celebration and risk rather than the icy waste of the Prism (or Prison) of Work, the economy of Lost Time, the rictus of nostalgia for a synthetic future.

A *utopian poetics* helps us to know our desires. The mirror of Utopia provides us with a kind of critical theory which no mere practical politics nor systematic philosophy can hope to evolve. But we have no time for theory which merely limits itself to the contemplation of utopia as “no-place place” while bewailing the “impossibility of desire.” The penetration of everyday life by the marvelous—the creation of “situations”—belongs to the “material bodily principle”, and to the imagination, and to the living fabric of the present.

The individual who realizes this immediacy can widen the circle of pleasure to some extent, simply by waking from the hypnosis of the “Spooks” (as Stirner called all abstractions); and yet more can be accomplished by “crime”; and still more by the doubling of the Self in sexuality. From Stirner’s “Union of Self-Owners” we proceed to Nietzsche’s circle of “Free Spirits” and thence to Fourier’s “Passional Series”, doubling and redoubling ourselves even as the Other multiplies itself in the *eros* of the group.

The activity of such a group will come to replace Art as we poor PoMo bastards know it. Gratuitous creativity, or “play”, and the exchange of gifts, will cause the withering-away of Art as the reproduction of commodities. “Dada epistemology” will meltingly erase all separation, and

give rebirth to a psychic paleolithism in which life and beauty can no longer be distinguished. Art in this sense has always been camouflaged and repressed throughout the whole of High History, but has never entirely vanished from our lives. One favourite example:—the *quilting bee*—a spontaneous patterning carried out by a non-hierarchic creative collective to produce a unique and useful and beautiful object, typically as a gift for someone connected to the circle.

The task of Immediatist organization can be summed up as the widening of the circle. The greater the portion of my life that can be wrenched from the Work/Consume/Die cycle, and (re)turned over to the economy of the “bee”, the greater my chance for pleasure. One runs a certain risk in thus thwarting the vampiric energies of institutions. But risk itself makes up part of the direct experience of pleasure, a fact noted in all insurrectionary moments—all moments of making-up—of intense adventurous enjoyments:—the festal aspect of the Uprising, the insurrectionary nature of the Festival.

But between the lonely awakening of the individual, and the synergetic anamnesis of the insurrectionary collectivity, there stretches out a whole spectrum of social forms with some potential for our “project”. Some last no longer than a chance meeting between two kindred spirits who might enlarge each other by their brief and mysterious encounter; others are like holidays, still other like pirate utopias. None seems to last very long—but so what? Religions and States boasts of their *permanence*—which, we know, is just jive...; what they mean is *death*.

We do not require “Revolutionary” *institutions*. “After the Revolution” we would still continue to drift, to evade the instant sclerosis of a politics of revenge, and instead seek out the excessive, the *strange*—which for us has become the sole possible norm. If we join or support certain “revolutionary” movements now, we’d certainly be the first to “betray” them if they “came to *power*”. Power, after all, is for *us*—not some fucking vanguard party.

In *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (Autonomedia, NY, 1991) there was a discussion of “the will to power as disappearance”, emphasizing the evasive nature and ambiguity of the moment of “freedom”. In the present series of texts (originally presented as Radio Sermonettes on an FM station in New York, and published under that title by the anarchist Libertarian Book Club), the focus shifts to the idea of a praxis of *re-appearance*, and thus to the problem of organization. An attempt at a theory of the aesthetics of the group—rather than a sociology or *politique*—has been expressed here as a game for free spirits, rather than as a blueprint for an institution. The group as medium, or as mechanism of alienation, has been replaced by the Immediatist group, devoted to the overcoming of separation. This book might be called a thought-experiment on *festal sodality*—it has no higher ambitions. Above all, it does not pretend to know “what must be done”—the delusion of would-be commissars and gurus. It wants no disciples—it would prefer to be burned—immolation not emulation! In fact it has almost no interest in “dialogue” at all, and would prefer rather to attract co-conspirators than readers. It loves to talk, but only because talk is a kind of celebration rather than a kind of work.

And only intoxication stands between this book—and silence.

— Hakim Bey  
(Vernal Equinox 1993)

# Immediatism

## i.

All experience is mediated—by the mechanisms of sense perception, mentation, language, etc.—& certainly all art consists of some further mediation of experience.

## ii.

However, mediation takes place by degrees. Some experiences (smell, taste, sexual pleasure, etc.) are less mediated than others (reading a book, looking through a telescope, listening to a record). Some media, especially “live” arts such as dance, theater, musical or bardic performance, are less mediated than others such as TV, CDs, Virtual Reality. Even among the media usually called “media,” some are more & others are less mediated, according to the intensity of imaginative participation they demand. Print & radio demand more of the imagination, film less, TV even less, VR the least of all—so far.

## iii.

For art, the intervention of Capital always signals a further degree of mediation. To say that art is commodified is to say that a mediation, or standing-inbetween, has occurred, & that this betweenness amounts to a split, & that this split amounts to “alienation.” Improv music played by friends at home is less “alienated” than music played “live” at the Met, or music played through media (whether PBS or MTV or Walkman). In fact, an argument could be made that music distributed free or at cost on cassette via mail is LESS alienated than live music played at some huge We Are The World spectacle or Las Vegas nightclub, even though the latter is live music played to a live audience (or at least so it appears), while the former is recorded music consumed by distant & even anonymous listeners.

## iv.

The tendency of Hi Tech, & the tendency of Late Capitalism, both impel the arts farther & farther into extreme forms of mediation. Both widen the gulf between the production & consumption of art, with a corresponding increase in “alienation.”

## v.

With the disappearance of a “mainstream” & therefore of an “avant-garde” in the arts, it has been noticed that all the more advanced & intense art-experiences have been recuperable almost

instantly by the media, & thus are rendered into trash like all other trash in the ghostly world of commodities. “Trash,” as the term was redefined in, let’s say, Baltimore in the 1970s, can be good fun—as an ironic take on a sort of inadvertent folkkultur that surrounds & pervades the more unconscious regions of “popular” sensibility—which in turn is produced in part by the Spectacle. “Trash” was once a fresh concept, with radical potential. By now, however, amidst the ruins of Post-Modernism, it has finally begun to stink. Ironic frivolity finally becomes disgusting. Is it possible now to BE SERIOUS BUT NOT SOBER? (Note: The New Sobriety is of course simply the flipside of the New Frivolity. Chic neo-puritanism carries the taint of Reaction, in just the same way that postmodernist philosophical irony & despair lead to Reaction. The Purge Society is the same as the Binge Society. After the “12 steps” of trendy renunciation in the ’90s, all that remains is the 13th step of the gallows. Irony may have become boring, but self-mutilation was never more than an abyss. Down with frivolity—Down with sobriety.)

Everything delicate & beautiful, from Surrealism to Break-dancing, ends up as fodder for McDeath’s ads; 15 minutes later all the magic has been sucked out, & the art itself dead as dried locust. The media-wizards, who are nothing if not postmodernists, have even begun to feed on the vitality of “Trash,” like vultures regurgitating & re-consuming the same carrion, in an obscene ecstasy of self-referentiality. Which way to the Egress?

## vi.

Real art is play, & play is one of the most immediate of all experiences. Those who have cultivated the pleasure of play cannot be expected to give it up simply to make a political point (as in an “Art Strike,” or “the suppression *without* the realization” of art, etc.) Art will go on, in somewhat the same sense that breathing, eating, or fucking will go on.

## vii.

Nevertheless, we are repelled by the extreme alienation of the arts, especially in “the media,” in commercial publishing & galleries, in the recording “industry,” etc. And we sometimes worry even about the extent to which our very involvement in such arts as writing, painting, or music implicates us in a nasty abstraction, a removal from immediate experience. We miss the directness of play (our original kick in doing art in the first place); we miss smell, taste, touch, the feel of bodies in motion.

## viii.

Computers, video, radio, printing presses, synthesizers, fax machines, tape recorders, photocopiers—these things make good toys, but terrible addictions. Finally we realize we cannot “reach out & touch someone” who is present in the flesh. These media may be useful to our art—but they must not possess us, nor must they stand between, mediate, or separate us from our animal/animate selves. We want to control our media, not be Controlled by them. And we should like to remember a certain psychic martial art which stresses the realization that the body itself is the least mediated of all media.



**ix.**

Therefore, as artists & “cultural workers” who have no intention of giving up activity in our chosen media, we nevertheless demand of ourselves an extreme awareness of *immediacy*, as well as the mastery of some direct means of implementing this awareness as play, immediately (at once) & immediately (without mediation).

**x.**

Fully realizing that any art “manifesto” written today can only stink of the same bitter irony it seeks to oppose, we nevertheless declare without hesitation (without too much thought) the founding of a “movement,” IMMEDIATISM. We feel free to do so because we intend to practice Immediatism *in secret*, in order to avoid any contamination of mediation. Publicly we’ll continue our work in publishing, radio, printing, music, etc., but privately we will create *something else*, something to be shared freely but never consumed passively, something which can be discussed openly but never understood by the agents of alienation, something with no commercial potential yet valuable beyond price, something occult yet woven completely into the fabric of our everyday lives.

**xi.**

Immediatism is not a movement in the sense of an aesthetic program. It depends on situation, not style or content, message or School. It may take the form of any kind of creative play which can be performed by two or more people, by & for themselves, face-to-face & together. In this sense it is like a game, & therefore certain “rules” may apply.

**xii.**

All spectators must also be performers. All expenses are to be shared, & all products which may result from the play are also to be shared by the participants only (who may keep them or bestow them as gifts, but should not sell them). The best games will make little or no use of obvious forms of mediation such as photography, recording, printing, etc., but will tend toward immediate techniques involving physical presence, direct communication, & the senses.

**xiii.**

An obvious matrix for Immediatism is the party. Thus a good meal could be an Immediatist art project, especially if everyone present cooked as well as ate. Ancient Chinese & Japanese on misty autumn days would hold odor parties, where each guest would bring a homemade incense or perfume. At linked-verse parties a faulty couplet would entail the penalty of a glass of wine. Quilting bees, *tableaux vivants*, exquisite corpses, rituals of conviviality like Fourier’s “Museum Orgy” (erotic costumes, poses, & skits), live music & dance—the past can be ransacked for appropriate forms, & imagination will supply more.

#### **xiv.**

The mail art of the '70s & the zine scene of the '80s were attempts to go beyond the mediation of art-as-commodity, & may be considered ancestors of Immediatism. However, they preserved the mediated structures of postal communication & xerography, & thus failed to overcome the isolation of the players, who remained quite literally out of touch. We wish to take the motives & discoveries of these earlier movements to their logical conclusion in an art which banishes all mediation & alienation, at least to the extent that the human condition allows.

#### **xvi.**

Moreover, Immediatism is not condemned to powerlessness of the world, simply because it avoids the publicity of the marketplace. "Poetic Terrorism" & "Art Sabotage" are quite logical manifestations of Immediatism.

#### **xvii.**

Finally, we expect that the practice of Immediatism will release within us vast storehouses of forgotten power, which will not only transform our lives through the secret realization of unmediated play, but will also inescapably well up & burst out & permeate the *other* art we create, the more public & mediated art.

And we hope that the two will grow closer & closer, & eventually perhaps become one.

# The Tong

The mandarins draw their power from the law;  
the people from the secret societies.

(Chinese saying)

Last winter I read a book on the Chinese Tongs (*Primitive Revolutionaries of China: A Study of Secret Societies in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Fei-Ling Davis; Honolulu, 1971-77):—maybe the first ever written by someone who *wasn't* a British Secret Service agent!—(in fact, she was a Chinese socialist who died young—this was her only book)—& for the first time I realized why I've always been attracted to the Tong: not just for the romanticism, the elegant decadent chinoiserie decor, as it were—but also for the form, the structure, the very essence of the thing.

Some time later in an excellent interview with William Burroughs in *Homocore* magazine I discovered that he too has become fascinated with Tongs & suggests the form as a perfect mode of organization for queers, particularly in this present era of shitheel moralism & hysteria. I'd agree, & extend the recommendation to *all* marginal groups, especially ones whose jouissance involves illegalism (potheads, sex heretics, insurrectionists) or extreme eccentricity (nudists, pagans, post-avant-garde artists, etc., etc.).

A Tong can perhaps be defined as a mutual benefit society for people with a common interest which is illegal or dangerously marginal—hence, the necessary *secrecy*. Many Chinese Tongs revolved around smuggling & tax-evasion, or clandestine self-control of certain trades (in opposition to State control), or insurrectionary political or religious aims (overthrow of the Manchus for example—several tongs collaborated with the Anarchists in the 1911 Revolution).

A common purpose of the tongs was to collect & invest membership dues & initiation fees in insurance funds for the indigent, unemployed, widows & orphans of deceased members, funeral expenses, etc. In an era like ours when the poor are caught between the cancerous Scylla of the insurance industry & the fast-evaporating Charybdis of welfare & public health services, this purpose of the Secret Society might well regain its appeal. (Masonic lodges were organized on this basis, as were the early & illegal trade unions & “chivalric orders” for laborers & artisans.) Another universal purpose for such societies was of course conviviality, especially banqueting—but even this apparently innocuous pastime can acquire insurrectionary implications. In the various French revolutions, for example, dining clubs frequently took on the role of radical organizations when all other forms of public meeting were banned.

Recently I talked about tongs with “P.M.,” author of *bolo'bolo* (Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series). I argued that secret societies are once again a valid possibility for groups seeking autonomy & individual realization. He disagreed, but not (as I expected) because of the “elitist” connotations of secrecy. He felt that such organizational forms work best for already-close-knit groups with strong economic, ethnic/regional, or religious ties—conditions which do not exist (or exist only embryonically) in today's marginal scene. He proposed instead the establishment

of multi-purpose neighborhood centers, with expenses to be shared by various special-interest groups & small-entrepreneurial concerns (craftspeople, coffeehouses, performance spaces, etc.). Such large centers would require official status (State recognition), but would obviously become foci for all sorts of non-official activity—black markets, temporary organization for “protest” or insurrectionary action, uncontrolled “leisure” & unmonitored conviviality, etc.

In response to “P.M.”’s critique I have not abandoned but rather modified my concept of what a modern Tong might be. The intensely hierarchical structure of the traditional tong would obviously not work, although some of the forms could be saved & used in the same way titles & honors are used in our “free religions” (or “weird” religions, “joke” religions, anarcho-neo-pagan cults, etc.). Non-hierarchic organization appeals to us, but so too does ritual, incense, the delightful bombast of occult orders—“Tong Aesthetics” you might call it—so why shouldn’t we have our cake & eat it too?—(especially if it’s Moroccan *majoun* or *baba au absinthe*—something a bit *forbidden!*). Among other things, the Tong should be a work of art.

The strict traditional rule of secrecy also needs modification. Nowadays anything which evades the idiot gaze of publicity is already *virtually* secret. Most modern people seem unable to believe in the reality of something they never see on television—therefore to escape being televisualized is already to be quasi-invisible. Moreover, that which is seen through the mediation of the media becomes somehow unreal, & loses its power (I won’t bother to defend this thesis but simply refer the reader to a train of thought which leads from Nietzsche to Benjamin to Bataille to Barthes to Foucault to Baudrillard). By contrast, perhaps that which is *unseen* retains its reality, its rootedness in everyday life & therefore in the possibility of the marvelous.

So the modern Tong cannot be elitist—but there’s no reason it can’t be *choosy*. Many non-authoritarian organizations have foundered on the dubious principle of open membership, which frequently leads to a preponderance of assholes, yahoos, spoilers, whining neurotics, & police agents. If a Tong is organized around a special interest (especially an illegal or risky or marginal interest) it certainly has the right to compose itself according to the “affinity group” principle. If secrecy means (a) avoiding publicity & (b) vetting possible members, the “secret society” can scarcely be accused of violating anarchist principles. In fact, such societies have a long & honorable history in the antiauthoritarian movement, from Proudhon’s dream of re-animating the Holy Vehm as a kind of “People’s Justice,” to Bakunin’s various schemes, to Durutti’s “Wanderers.” We ought not to allow marxist historians to convince us that such expedients are “primitive” & have therefore been left behind by “History.” The absoluteness of “History” is at best a dubious proposition. We are not interested in a return to the primitive, but in a return OF the primitive, inasmuch as the primitive is the “repressed.”

In the old days secret societies would appear in times & spaces forbidden by the State, i.e. where & when people are *kept apart* by law. In our times people are usually not kept apart by law but by mediation & alienation (see Part 1, “Immediatism”). Secrecy therefore becomes an avoidance of mediation, while conviviality changes from a secondary to a primary purpose of the “secret society.” Simply to meet together face-to-face is already an action against the forces which oppress us by isolation, by loneliness, by the trance of media.

In a society which enforces a schizoid split between Work & Leisure, we have all experienced the trivialization of our “free time,” time which is organized neither as work nor as leisure. (“Vacation” once meant “empty” time—now it signifies time which is organized & filled by the industry of leisure.) The “secret” purpose of conviviality in the secret society then becomes the self-structuring & auto-valorization of free time. Most parties are devoted only to loud music &

too much booze, not because we enjoy them but because the Empire of Work has imbued us with the feeling that empty time is wasted time. The idea of throwing a party to, say, make a quilt or sing madrigals together, seems hopelessly outdated. But the modern Tong will find it both necessary & enjoyable to seize back free time from the commodity world & devote it to shared creation, to *play*.

I know of several societies organized along these lines already, but I'm certainly not going to blow their secrecy by discussing them in print. There are *some* people who do not need fifteen seconds on the Evening News to validate their existence. Of course, the marginal press & radio (probably the only media in which this sermonette will appear) are practically invisible anyway—certainly still quite opaque to the gaze of Control. Nevertheless, there's the principle of the thing: secrets should be respected. Not everyone needs to know everything! What the 20th century lacks most—& needs most—is *tact*. We wish to replace democratic epistemology with “dada epistemology” (Feyerabend). Either you're on the bus or you're not on the bus.

Some will call this an elitist attitude, but it is not—at least not in the C. Wright Mills sense of the word: that is, a small group which exercises power over non-insiders for its own aggrandizement. Immediatism does not concern itself with power-relations;—It desires neither to be ruled nor to rule. The contemporary Tong therefore finds no pleasure in the degeneration of institutions into conspiracies. It wants power for its own purposes of mutuality. It is a free association of individuals who have chosen each other as subjects to the group's generosity, its “expansiveness” (to use a *sufi* term). If this amounts to some kind of “elitism,” then so be it.

If Immediatism begins with groups of friends trying not just to overcome isolation but also to enhance each other's lives, soon it will want to take a more complex shape:—nuclei of mutually-self-chosen allies, working (playing) to occupy more & more time & space outside all mediated structure & control. Then it will want to become a horizontal network of such autonomous groups—then, a “tendency”—then, a “movement”—then, a kinetic web of “temporary autonomous zones.” At last it will strive to become the kernel of a new society, giving birth to itself within the corrupt shell of the old. For all these purposes the secret society promises to provide a useful framework of protective clandestinity—a cloak of invisibility that will have to be dropped only in the event of some final snowdown with the Babylon of Mediation...

Prepare for the Tong Wars!

# Immediatism vs. Capitalism

Many monsters stand between us & the realization of Immediatist goals. For instance our own ingrained unconscious alienation might all too easily be mistaken for a virtue, especially when contrasted with crypto-authoritarian pap passed off as “community,” or with various upscale versions of “leisure.” Isn’t it natural to take the *dandyism noir* of curmudgeonly hermits for some kind of heroic individualism, when the only visible contrast is Club Med commodity socialism, or the gemütlich masochism of the Victim Cults? To be doomed & cool naturally appeals more to noble souls than to be saved & cozy.

Immediatism means to enhance individuals by providing a matrix of friendship, not to belittle them by sacrificing their “ownness” to group-think, leftist self-abnegation, or New Age clone-values. What must be overcome is not individuality per se, but rather the addiction to bitter loneliness which characterizes consciousness in the 20th century (which is by & large not much more than a re-run of the 19th).

Far more dangerous than any inner monster of (what might be called) “negative selfishness,” however, is the outward, very real & utterly objective monster of too-Late Capitalism. The marxists (R.I.P.) had their own version of how this worked, but here we are not concerned with abstract/dialectical analyses of labor-value or class structure (even though these may still require analysis, & even more so since the “death” or “disappearance” of Communism). Instead we’d like to point out specific tactical dangers facing any Immediatist project.

1. Capitalism only *supports* certain kinds of groups, the nuclear family for example, or “the people I know at my job,” because such groups are already self-alienated & hooked into the Work/Consume/Die structure. Other kinds of groups may be *allowed*, but will lack all support from societal structure, & thus find themselves facing grotesque challenges & difficulties which appear under the guise of “bad luck.”

The first & most innocent-seeming obstacle to any Immediatist project will be the “busyness” or “need to make a living” faced by each of its associates. However there is no real innocence here—only our profound ignorance of the ways in which Capitalism itself is organized to prevent all genuine conviviality.

No sooner have a group of friends begun to visualize immediate goals realizable only thru solidarity & cooperation, when suddenly one of them will be offered a “good” job in Cincinnati or teaching English in Taiwan—or else have to move back to California to care for a dying parent—or else they’ll lose the “good” job they already have & be reduced to a state of misery which precludes their very enjoyment of the group’s project or goals (i.e. they’ll become “depressed”). At the most mundane-seeming level, the group will fail to agree on a day of the week for meetings because everyone is “busy.” But this is not mundane. It’s sheer cosmic evil. We whip ourselves into froths of indignation over “oppression” & “unjust laws” when in fact these abstractions have little impact on our daily lives—while that which really makes us miserable goes unnoticed, written off to “busyness” or “distraction” or even to the nature of reality itself (“Well, I can’t *live* without a job”).

Yes, perhaps it's true we can't "live" without a job—although I hope we're grown-up enough to know the difference between *life* & the accumulation of a bunch of fucking *gadgets*. Still, we must constantly remind ourselves (since our culture won't do it for us) that this monster called WORK remains the precise & exact target of our rebellious wrath, the one single most oppressive *reality* we face (& we must learn also to recognize Work when it's disguised as "leisure").

To be "too busy" for the Immediatist project is to miss the very essence of Immediatism. To struggle to *come together* every Monday night (or whatever), in the teeth of the gale of busyness, or family, or invitations to stupid parties—that struggle is *already* Immediatism itself. Succeed in actually physically meeting face-to-face with a group which is not your spouse-&-kids, or the "guys from my job," or your 12-step Program—& you have *already* achieved virtually everything Immediatism yearns for. An actual project will arise almost spontaneously out of this successful slap-in-the-face of the social norm of alienated boredom. Outwardly, of course, the project will seem to be the group's purpose, its motive for coming together—but in fact the opposite is true. We're not kidding or indulging in hyperbole when we insist that *meeting-face-to-face is already "the revolution."* Attain it & the creativity part comes naturally; like "the kingdom of heaven" it will be added unto you. Of *course* it will be horribly difficult—why else would we have spent the last decade trying to construct our "bohemia in the mail," if it were easy to have it in some *quartier latin* or rural commune? The rat-bastard Capitalist scum who are telling you to "reach out & touch someone" with a telephone or "be there!" (where? alone in front of a goddam television??)—these lovecrafty suckers are trying to turn you into a scrunched-up blood-drained pathetic crippled little cog in the death-machine of the human soul (& let's not have any theological quibbles about what we mean by "soul"! ). Fight them—by meeting with friends, not to consume or produce, but to enjoy friendship—& you will have triumphed (at least for a moment) over the most pernicious conspiracy in EuroAmerican society today—the conspiracy to turn you into a living corpse galvanized by prosthesis & the terror of scarcity—to turn you into a spook haunting your own brain. This is not a petty matter! This is a question of failure or triumph!

2. If busyness & fission are the first potential failures of Immediatism, we cannot say that its triumph should be equated with "success." The second major threat to our project can quite simply be described as the tragic success of the project itself. Let's say we've overcome physical alienation & have actually met, developed our project, & created something (a quilt, a banquet, a play, a bit of eco-sabotage, etc.). Unless we keep it an absolute secret—which is probably impossible & in any case would constitute a somewhat poisonous selfishness—*other people* will hear of it (other people from hell, to paraphrase the existentialists)— & among these other people, some will be agents (conscious or unconscious, it doesn't matter) of too-Late Capitalism. The Spectacle—or whatever has replaced it since 1968—is above all *empty*. It fuels itself by the constant Moloch-like gulping-down of everyone's creative powers & ideas. It's more desperate for *your* "radical subjectivity" than any vampire or cop for your blood. It wants your creativity much more even than you want it yourself. It would die unless you desired it, & you will only desire it if it seems to offer you the very desires you dreamed, alone in your lonely genius, disguised & sold back to you as commodities. Ah, the metaphysical shenanigans of objects! (or words to that effect, Marx cited by Benjamin).

Suddenly it will appear to you (as if a demon had whispered it in your ear) that the Immediatist art you've created is so good, so fresh, so original, so strong compared to all the crap on the "market"—so *pure*—that you could water it down & sell it, & *make a living* at it, so you could all knock off WORK, buy a farm in the country, & do art together for-ever after. And perhaps it's

true. You *could*...after all, you're geniuses. But it'd be better to fly to Hawaii & throw yourself into a live volcano. Sure, you could have success; you could even have 15 seconds on the Evening News—or a PBS documentary made on your life. Yes indeedy.

3. But this is where the last major monster steps in, crashes thru the living room wall, & snuffs you (if Success itself hasn't already "spoiled" you, that is).

Because in order to succeed you must first be "seen." And if you are *seen*, you will be perceived as wrong, illegal, immoral—different. The Spectacle's main sources of creative energy are all in prison. If you're not a nuclear family or a guided tour or the Republican Party, then why are you meeting every Monday evening? To do drugs? illicit sex? income tax evasion? satanism?

And of course the chances are good that your Immediatist group *is* engaged in something illegal—since almost everything enjoyable is in fact illegal. Babylon hates it when anyone actually enjoys life, rather than merely spends money in a vain attempt to buy the illusion of enjoyment. Dissipation, gluttony, bulimic overconsumption—these are not only legal but mandatory. If you don't waste yourself on the emptiness of commodities you are obviously *queer* & must by definition be breaking some law. True pleasure in this society is more dangerous than bank robbery. At least bank robbers share Massa's respect for Massa's money. But you, you perverts, clearly deserve to be burned at the stake—& here come the peasants with their torches, eager to do the State's bidding without even being asked. Now you are the monsters, & your little gothic castle of Immediatism is engulfed in flames. Suddenly cops are swarming out of the woodwork. Are your papers in order? Do you have a permit to exist?

Immediatism is a picnic—but it's not *easy*. Immediatism is the most natural path for free humans imaginable—& *therefore* the most unnatural abomination in the eyes of Capital. Immediatism will triumph, but only at the cost of *self-organization of power, of clandestinity, & of insurrection*. Immediatism is our delight, Immediatism is *dangerous*.



# Involution

So far we've treated Immediatism as an aesthetic movement rather than a political one—but if the “personal is political” then certainly the aesthetic must be considered even more so. “Art for art's sake” cannot really be said to exist at all, unless it be taken to imply that art *per se* functions as political power, i.e. power capable of expressing or even changing the world rather than merely describing it.

In fact art always seeks such power, whether the artist remains unconscious of the fact & believes in “pure” aesthetics, or becomes so hyper-conscious of the fact as to produce nothing but agit-prop. Consciousness in itself, as Nietzsche pointed out, plays a less significant role in life than power. No snappier proof of this could be imagined than the continued existence of an “Art World” (SoHo, 57th St., etc.) which still believes in the separate realms of political art & aesthetic art. Such failure of consciousness allows this “world” the luxury of producing art with overt political *content* (to satisfy their liberal customers) as well as art without such content, which merely expresses the power of the bourgeois scum & bankers who buy it for their investment portfolios.

If art did not possess & wield this power it would not be worth doing & nobody would do it. Literal art for art's sake would produce nothing but impotence & nullity. Even the fin-de-siècle decadents who invented *l'art pour l'art* used it politically:—as a weapon against bourgeois values of “utility,” “morality” & so on. The idea that art can be voided of political meaning appeals now only to those liberal cretins who wish to excuse “pornography” or other forbidden aesthetic games on the grounds that “it's only art” & hence can change nothing. (I hate these assholes worse than Jesse Helms; at least *he* still believes that art has *power*!)

Even if an art without political content can—for the moment—be admitted to exist (altho this remains exceedingly problematic), then the political meaning of art can still be sought in the *means of its production & consumption*. The art of 57th St. remains bourgeois no matter how radical its content may appear, as Warhol proved by painting Che Guevara; in fact Valerie Solanis revealed herself far more radical than Warhol—by shooting him—(& perhaps even more radical than Che, that Rudolf Valentino of Red Fascism).

In fact we're not terribly concerned with the content of Immediatist art. Immediatism remains for us more game than “movement”; as such, the game might result in Brechtian didacticism or Poetic Terrorism, but it might equally well leave behind no content at all (as in a banquet), or else one with no obvious political message (such as a quilt). The radical quality of Immediatism expresses itself rather in its mode of production & consumption.

That is, it is produced by a group of friends either for itself alone or for a larger circle of friends; it is *not* produced for sale, nor is it sold, nor (ideally) is it allowed to slip out of the control of its producers in any way. If it is meant for consumption outside the circle then it must be made in such a way as to remain impervious to cooptation & commodification. For example, if one of our quilts escaped us & ended up sold as “art” to some capitalist or museum, we should consider it a disaster. Quilts must remain in our hands or be given to those who will appreciate them &

keep them. As for our agitprop, it must resist commodification by its very form;—we don't want our posters sold twenty years later as "art," like Myakovsky (or Brecht, for that matter). The best Immediatist agitprop will leave no trace at all, except in the souls of those who are *changed* by it.

Let us repeat here that participation in Immediatism does not preclude the production/consumption of art in other ways by the individuals making up the group. We are not ideologues, & this is not Jonestown. This is a game, not a movement; it has rules of play, but no laws. Immediatism would love it if everyone were an artist, but our goal is not mass conversion. The game's payoff lies in its ability to escape the paradoxes & contradictions of the commercial art world (including literature, etc.), in which all liberatory gestures seem to end up as mere representations & hence betrayals of themselves. We offer the chance for art which is immediately *present* by virtue of the fact that it can exist only in our presence. Some of us may still write novels or paint pictures, either to "make a living" or to seek out ways to redeem these forms from recuperation. But Immediatism sidesteps both these problems. Thus it is "privileged," like all games.

But we cannot for this reason alone call it *involved*, turned in on itself, closed, hermetic, elitist, art for art's sake. In Immediatism art is produced & consumed in a certain way, & this modus operandi is already "political" in a very specific sense. In order to grasp this sense, however, we must first explore "involution" more closely.

It's become a truism to say that society no longer expresses a consensus (whether reactionary or liberatory), but that a false consensus is expressed for society; let's call this false consensus "the Totality." The Totality is produced thru mediation & alienation, which attempt to subsume or absorb all creative energies for the Totality. Myakovsky killed himself when he realized this; perhaps we're made of sterner stuff, perhaps not. But for the sake of argument, let us assume that suicide is *not* a "solution."

The Totality isolates individuals & renders them powerless by offering only illusory modes of social expression, modes which seem to promise liberation or self-fulfillment but in fact end by producing yet more mediation & alienation. This complex can be viewed clearly at the level of "commodity fetishism," in which the most rebellious or avant-garde forms in art can be turned into fodder for PBS or MTV or ads for jeans or perfume.

On a subtler level, however, the Totality can absorb & re-direct any power whatsoever simply by re-contextualizing & re-presenting it. For instance, the liberatory power of a painting can be neutralized or even absorbed simply by placing it in the context of a gallery or museum, where it will automatically become a mere *representation* of liberatory power. The insurrectionary gesture of a madman or criminal is not negated only by locking up the perpetrator, but even more by allowing the gesture to be represented—by a psychiatrist or by some brainless Kopshow on channel 5 or even by a coffee-table book on Art Brut. This has been called "Spectacular recuperation"; however, the Totality can go even farther than this simply by *simulating* that which it formerly sought to recuperate. That is, the artist & madman are no longer necessary even as sources of appropriation or "mechanical reproduction," as Benjamin called it. Simulation cannot reproduce the faint reflection of "aura" which Benjamin allowed even to commodity-trash, its "utopian trace." Simulation cannot in fact reproduce or produce anything except desolation & misery. But since the Totality *thrives* on our misery, simulation suits its purpose quite admirably.

All these effects can be tracked most obviously & crudely in the area generally called "the Media" (altho we contend that *mediation* has a much wider range than even the term *broad-cast* could ever describe or indicate). The role of the Media in the recent Nintendo War—in fact the Me-

dia's one-to-one identification with that war—provides a perfect & exemplary scenario. All over America millions of people possessed *at least* enough “enlightenment” to condemn this hideous parody of morality enforced by that murderous crack-dealing spy in the White House. The Media however produced (i.e. simulated) the impression that virtually no opposition to Bush's war existed or could exist; that (to quote Bush) “there is no Peace Movement.” And in fact there *was* no Peace *Movement*—only millions of people whose desire for peace had been *negated by the Totality*, wiped out, “disappeared” like victims of Peruvian death squads; people separated from each other by the brutal alienation of TV, news management, infotainment & sheer disinformation; people made to feel isolated alienated, weird, queer, wrong, finally non-existent; people without voices; people without power.

This process of fragmentation has reached near-universal completion in our society, at least in the area of social discourse. Each person engages in a “relation of involution” with the spectacular simulation of Media. That is, our “relation” with Media is essentially empty & illusory, so that even when we seem to reach out & perceive reality in Media, we are in fact merely driven back in upon ourselves, alienated, isolated, & impotent. America is full to overflowing with people who feel that no matter what they say or do, no difference will be made; that no one is listening; that there is no one to listen. This *feeling* is the triumph of the Media. “They” speak, *you* listen—and therefore turn in upon yourself in a spiral of loneliness, distraction, depression, & spiritual death.

This process affects not only individuals but also such groups as still exist outside the Consensus Matrix of nuke-family, school, church, job, army, political party, etc. Each *group* of artists or peace activists or whatever is also made to feel that no contact with other groups is possible. Each “life-style” group buys the simulation of rivalry & enmity with other such groups of consumers. Each class & race is assured of its ungulfable existential alienation from all other classes & races (as in *Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous*).

The concept of “networking” began as a revolutionary strategy to bypass & overcome the Totality by setting up horizontal connections (unmediated by authority) among individuals & group. In the 1980s we discovered that networking could also be mediated & in fact had to be mediated—by telephone, computers, the post office, etc.—& thus was doomed to fail us in our struggle against alienation. Communication technology may still prove to offer useful *tools* in this struggle, but by now it has become clear that CommTech is not a goal in itself. And in fact our distrust of seemingly “democratic” tech like PCs & phones increases with every revolutionary failure to hold control of the means of production. Frankly we do not wish to be forced to make up our minds whether or not any new tech will be or must be either liberatory or counter-liberatory. “After the revolution” such questions would answer themselves in the context of a “politics of desire.” For the time being, however, we have discovered (not invented) Immediatism as a means of direct production & presentation of creative, liberatory & ludic energies, carried out without recourse to mediation of any mechanistic or alienated structures *whatsoever*...or at least so we hope.

In other words, whether or not any given technology or form of mediation can be used to overcome the Totality, we have decided to play a game that uses no such tech & hence does not need to question it—at least, not within the borders of the game. We reserve our challenge, our question, for the total Totality, not for anyone “issue” with which it seeks to distract us.

And this brings us back to the “political form” of Immediatism. Face-to-face, body-to-body, breath-to-breath (literally a conspiracy)—the game of Immediatism simply *cannot* be played on any level accessible to the false Consensus. It does not represent “everyday life”—*it cannot BE*

*other than everyday life*, although it positions itself for the penetration of the marvelous, for the illumination of the real by the wonderful. Like a secret society, the networking it does must be slow (infinitely more slow than the “pure speed” of CommTech, media & war), & it must be *corporeal* rather than abstract, fleshless, mediated by machine or by authority or by simulation.

In this sense we say that Immediatism is a picnic (a conviviality) but is not *easy*—that it is most natural for free spirits but that it is *dangerous*. Content has nothing to do with it. The sheer existence of Immediatism is already an insurrection.

# Imagination

There is a time for the theatre.—If people’s imagination grows weak there arises in it the inclination to have its legends presented to it on the stage: it can now endure these crude substitutes for imagination. But those ages to which the epic rhapsodist belongs, the theatre and the actor disguised as a hero is a hindrance to imagination rather than a means of giving it wings: too close, too definite, too heavy, too little in it of dream and bird-flight.

— Nietzsche

But of course the rhapsodist, who here appears only one step removed from the shaman (“...dream and bird-flight”) must also be called a kind of *medium* or bridge standing between “a people” and its imagination. (Note: we’ll use the word “imagination” sometimes in Wm. Blake’s sense & sometimes in Gaston Bachelard’s sense without opting for either a “spiritual” or an “aesthetic” determination, & without recourse to metaphysics.) A bridge carries across (“translate,” “metaphor”) but is not the original. And to translate is to betray. Even the rhapsodist provides a little poison for the imagination.

Ethnography, however, allows us to assert the possibility of societies where shamans are not *specialists* of the imagination, but where everyone is a special sort of shaman. In these societies, all members (except the psychically handicapped) act as shamans & bards for themselves as well as for their people. For example: certain Amerindian tribes of the Great Plains developed the most complex of all hunter/gatherer societies quite late in their history (perhaps partly in thanks to the gun & horse, technologies adopted from European culture). Each person acquired complete identity & full membership in “the People” only thru the Vision Quest, & its artistic enactment for the tribe. Thus each person became an “epic rhapsodist” in sharing this individuality with the collectivity.

The Pygmies, among the most “primitive” cultures, neither produce nor consume their music, but become *en masse* “the Voice of the Forest.” At the other end of the scale, among complex agricultural societies, like Bali on the verge of the 20th century, “everyone is an artist” (& in 1980 a Javanese mystic told me, “Everyone *must be* an artist!”).

The goals of Immediatism lie somewhere along the trajectory described roughly by these three points (Pygmies, Plains Indians, Balinese), which have all been linked to the anthropological concept of “democratic shamanism.” Creative acts, themselves the outer results of the inwardness of imagination, are not *mediated & alienated* (in the sense we’ve been using those terms) when they are carried out BY everyone FOR everyone—when they are produced but not reproduced—when they are shared but not fetishezied. Of course these acts are achieved thru mediation of some sort & to some extent, as are all acts—but they have not yet become forces of extreme alienation between some Expert/Priest/Producer on the one hand & some hapless “layperson” or consumer on the other.

Different media therefore exhibit different degrees of mediation—and perhaps they can even be ranked on that basis. Here everything depends on reciprocity, on a more-or-less equal exchange of what may be called “quanta of imagination.” In the case of the epic rhapsodist who mediates vision for the tribe, a great deal of work—or active dreaming—still remains to be done by the hearers. They must participate imaginatively in the act of telling/hearing, & must call up images from their own stores of creative power to complete the rhapsodist’s act.

In the “ritual theater” of Voodoo & Santeria, everyone present must participate by visualizing the *loas* or *orishas* (imaginal archetypes), & by calling upon them (with “signature” chants & rhythms) to manifest. Anyone present may become a “horse” or medium for one of these *santos*, whose words & actions then assume for all celebrants the aspect of the presence of the spirit (i.e. the possessed person does not represent but presents). This structure, which also underlies Indonesian ritual theater, may be taken as exemplary for the creative production of “democratic shamanism.” In order to construct our scale of imagination for all media, we may start by comparing this “voodoo theater” with the 18th century European theater described by Nietzsche.

In the latter, nothing of the original vision (or “spirit”) is actually present. The actors merely re-present—they are “disguised.” It is not expected that any member of troupe or audience will suddenly become possessed (or even “inspired” to any great extent) by the playwright’s images. The actors are specialists or experts of representation, while the audience are “laypeople” to whom various images are being transferred. The audience is passive, too much is being done for the audience, who are indeed locked in place in darkness & silence, immobilized by the money they’ve paid for this vicarious experience.

Artaud, who realized this, attempted to revive ritual voodoo theater (banished from Western Culture by Aristotle)—but he carried out the attempt within the very structure (actor/audience) of aristotelian theater; he tried to destroy or mutate it from the inside out. He failed & went insane, setting off a whole series of experiments which culminated in the Living Theater’s assault on the actor/audience barrier, a literal assault which tried to force audience members to “participate” in the ritual. These experiments produced some great theater, but all failed in their deepest purpose. None managed to overcome the alienation Nietzsche & Artaud had criticized.

Even so, Theater occupies a much higher place on the imaginal Scale than other & later media such as film. At least in theater actors & audience are physically present in the same space together, allowing for the creation of what Peter Brook calls the “invisible golden chain” of attention & fellow-feeling between actors & audience—the well-known “magic” or theater. With film, however, this chain is broken. Now the audience sits alone in the dark with nothing to do, while the absent actors are represented by gigantic icons. Always the same no matter how many times it is “shown,” made to be reproduced mechanically, devoid of all “aura,” film actually *forbids* its audience to “participate”—film has no need of the audience’s imagination. Of course, film does need the audience’s money, & money is a kind of concretized imaginal residue, after all.

Einstein would point out that montage establishes a dialectic tension in film which engages the viewer’s mind—intellect & imagination—and Disney might add (if he were capable of ideology) that animation increases this effect because animation is, in effect, completely made up of montage. Film too has its “magic.” Granted. But from the point of view of *structure* we have come a long way from voodoo theater & democratic shamanism—we have come perilously close to the commodification of the imagination, & to the alienation of commodity-relations. We have almost resigned our power of flight, even of dream-flight.

Books? Books as media transmit only words—no sounds, sights, smells or feels, all of which are left up to the reader’s imagination. Fine... But there’s nothing “democratic” about books. The author/publisher produces, you consume. Books appeal to “imaginative” people, perhaps, but all their imaginal activity really amounts to passivity, sitting alone with a book, letting someone else tell the story. The magic of books has something sinister about it, as in Borges’s Library. The Church’s idea of a list of damnable books probably didn’t go far enough—for in a sense, all books are damned. The *eros* of the text is a perversion—albeit, nevertheless, one to which we are addicted, & in no hurry to kick.

As for radio, it is clearly a medium of absence—like the book only more so, since books leave you alone in the light, radio alone in the dark. The more exacerbated passivity of the “listener” is revealed by the fact that advertisers pay for spots on radio, not in books (or not very much). Nevertheless radio leaves a great deal more imaginative “work” for the listener than, say, television for the viewer. The magic of radio: one can use it to listen to sunspot radiation, storms on Jupiter, the whizz of comets. Radio is old-fashioned; therein lies its seductiveness. Radio preachers say, “Put your haaadns on the Radio, brothers & sisters, & feel the heeeeeeaaaling power of the *Word!*” Voodoo Radio?

(Note: A similar analysis of recorded music might be made: i.e., that it is alienating but not yet alienated. Records replaced family amateur music-making. Recorded music is too ubiquitous, too easy—that which is not present is not *rare*. And yet there’s a lot to be said for scratchy old 78s played over distant radio stations late at night—a flash of illumination which seems to spark across all the levels of mediation & achieve a paradoxical presence.)

It’s in this sense that we might perhaps give some credence to the otherwise dubious proposition that “radio is good—television evil!” For television occupies the bottom rung of the scale of imagination in media. No that’s not true. “Virtual Reality” is even lower. But TV is the medium the Situationists meant when they referred to “the Spectacle.” Television is the medium which Immediatism most wants to overcome. Books, theater, film & radio all retain what Benjamin called “the utopian trace” (at least in *potential*)—the last vestige of an impulse against alienation, the last perfume of the imagination. TV however *began* by erasing even that trace. No wonder the first broadcasters of video were the Nazis. TV is to the imagination what virus is to the DNA. The end. Beyond TV there lies only the infra-media realm of no-space/no-time, the instantaneity & ecstasis of CommTech, pure speed, the downloading of consciousness into the machine, into the program—in other words, hell.

Does this mean that Immediatism wants to “abolish television”? No, certainly not—for Immediatism wants to be a game, not a political movement, & certainly not a revolution with the power to abolish any medium. The goals of Immediatism must be positive, not negative. We feel no calling to eliminate any “means of production” (or even re-production) which might after all some day fall into the hands of “a people.”

We have analyzed media by asking how much imagination is involved in each, & how much reciprocity, solely in order to implement for ourselves the most effective means of solving the problem outlined by Nietzsche & felt so painfully by Artaud, the problem of alienation. For this task we need a rough hierarchy of media, a means of measuring their potential for our uses. Roughly, then, *the more imagination is liberated & shared, the more useful the medium.*

Perhaps we can no longer call up spirits to possess us, or visit their realms as the shamans did. Perhaps no such spirits exist, or perhaps we are too “civilized” to recognize them. Or perhaps

not. The creative imagination, however, remains for us a reality—& one which we must explore, even in the vain hope of our salvation.



# Lascaux

Every culture (or anyway every major urban/agricultural culture) cherishes two myths which apparently contradict each other: the myth of Degeneration & the myth of Progress. René Guénon & the neo-traditionalists like to pretend that no ancient culture ever believed in Progress, but of course they all did.

One version of the myth of Degeneration in Indo-European culture centers around the image of metals: gold, silver, bronze, iron. But what of the myth wherein Kronos & the Titans are destroyed to make way for Zeus & the Olympians?—a story which parallels that of Tiamat & Marduk, or Leviathan & Jah. In these “Progress” myths, an earlier chthonic chaotic earthbound (or watery) “feminine” pantheon is replaced (overthrown) by a later spiritualized orderly heavenly “male” pantheon. Is this not a *step forward* in Time? And have not Buddhism, Christianity, & Islam all claimed to be *better* than paganism?

In truth of course both myths—Degeneration as well as Progress—serve the purpose of Control & the Society of Control. Both admit that before the present state of affairs something else existed, a different form of the Social. In both cases we appear to be seeing a “race-memory” vision of the Paleolithic, the great long unchanging pre-history of the human. In one case that era is seen as a nastily brutish vast disorder; the 18th century did not *discover* this viewpoint, but found it already expressed in Classical & Christian culture. In the other case, the primordial is viewed as precious, innocent, happier, & easier than the present, more numinous than the present—but *irrevocably vanished*, impossible to recover except through death.

Thus for all loyal & enthusiastic devotees of Order, Order presents itself as immeasurably more perfect than any original Chaos; while for the disaffected potential enemies of Order, Order presents itself as cruel & oppressive (“iron”) but utterly & fatally unavoidable—in fact, omnipotent.

In neither case will the mythopoeists of Order admit that “Chaos” or “the Golden Age” could still exist in the present, or that they *do* exist in the present, here & now in fact—but repressed by the illusory totality of the Society of Order. We however believe that “the paleolithic” (which is neither more nor less a myth than “chaos” or “golden age”) does exist even now as a kind of unconscious within the social. We also believe that as the Industrial Age comes to an end, & with it the last of the Neolithic “agricultural revolution,” & with it the decay of the last religions of Order, that this “repressed material” will once again be uncovered. What else could we mean when we speak of “psychic nomadism” or “the disappearance of the Social”?

*The end of the Modern does not mean a return TO the Paleolithic, but a return OF the Paleolithic.*

Post-classical (or post-academic) anthropology has prepared us for this return of the repressed, for only very recently have we come to understand & sympathize with hunter/gatherer societies. The caves of Lascaux were rediscovered precisely when they needed to be rediscovered, for no ancient Roman nor medieval Christian nor 18th century rationalist could have ever have found them beautiful or significant. In these caves (symbols of an archaeology of consciousness) we found the artists who created them; we discovered them as ancestors, & also as *ourselves*, alive & present.

Paul Goodman once defined anarchism as “neolithic conservatism.” Witty, but no longer accurate. Anarchism (or Ontological Anarchism, at least) no longer sympathizes with peasant agriculturalists, but with the non-authoritarian social structures & pre-surplus-value economics of the hunter/gatherers. Moreover we cannot describe this sympathy as “conservative.” A better term would be “radical,” since we have found our roots in the Old Stone Age, a kind of eternal present. We do not wish to return to a material technology of the past (we have no desire to bomb ourselves back to the Stone Age), but rather for the return of a psychic technology which we forgot we possessed.

The fact that we find Lascaux beautiful means that Babylon has at last begun to fall. Anarchism is probably more a symptom than a cause of this melting away. Despite our utopian imagination we do not know what to expect. But we, at least, are prepared for the *drift* into the unknown. For us it is an adventure, not the End of the World. We have welcomed the return of Chaos, for along with the danger comes—at last—a chance to create.

## Vernissage

What's so funny about *Art*?

Was Art laughed to death by dada? Or perhaps this sardonicide took place even earlier, with the first performance of *Ubu Roi*? Or with Baudelaire's sarcastic phantom-of-the-opera laughter, which so disturbed his good bourgeois friends?

What's funny about Art (though it's more funny-peculiar than funny-ha-ha) is the sight of the corpse that refuses to lie down, this zombie jamboree, this charnel puppetshow with all the strings attached to Capital (bloated Diego Rivera-style plutocrat), this moribund simulacrum jerking frenetically around, pretending to be the one single most truly alive thing in the universe.

In the face of an irony like this, a doubleness so extreme it amounts to an impassable abyss, any *healing* power of laughter-in-art can only be rendered suspect, the illusory property of a self-appointed elite or pseudo-avant-garde. To have a genuine avant-garde, Art must be *going somewhere*, & this has long since ceased to be the case. We mentioned Rivera; surely no more genuinely funny political artist has painted in our century—but in aid of what? Trotskyism! The deadest dead-end of twentieth century politics! No healing power *here*—only the hollow sound of powerless mockery, echoing over the abyss.

To heal, one first destroys—& political art which falls to destroy the target of its laughter ends by strengthening the very forces it sought to attack. “What doesn't kill me makes me stronger,” sneers the porcine figure in its shiny top hat (mocking Nietzsche, of course, poor Nietzsche, who tried to laugh the whole nineteenth century to death, but ended up a living corpse, whose sister tied strings to his limbs to make him dance for fascists).

There's nothing particularly mysterious or metaphysical about the process. Circumstance, poverty, once forced Rivera to accept a commission to come to the USA & paint a mural—for Rockfeller!—the very archetypal Wall Street porker himself! Rivera made his work a blatant piece of Commie agitprop—& then Rockfeller had it *obliterated*. As if this weren't funny enough, the real joke is that Rockfeller could have savored victory even more sweetly by *not* destroying the Art, that toothless parasite of the interior decorator, that *joke*.

The dream of Romanticism: that the reality-world of bourgeois values could somehow be persuaded to consume, to take into itself, an art which at first seemed like all other art (books to read, paintings to hang on the wall, etc.), but which would secretly infect that reality with *something else*, which would change the way it saw itself, overturn it, replace it with the revolutionary values of art.

This was also the dream Surrealism dreamed. Even dada, despite its outward show of cynicism, still dared to hope. From Romanticism to Situationism, from Blake to 1968, the dream of each succeeding yesterday became the parlor decor of every tomorrow—bought, chewed, reproduced, sold, consigned to museums, libraries, universities, & other mausolea, forgotten, lost, resurrected, turned into nostalgia-craze, reproduced, sold, etc., etc., *ad nauseam*.

In order to understand how thoroughly Cruikshank or Daumier or Grandville or Rivera or Tzara or Duchamp *destroyed* the bourgeois worldview of their time, one must bury oneself in

a blizzard of historical references & *hallucinate*—for in fact the destruction-by-laughter was a theoretical success but an actual flop—the dead weight of illusion failed to budge even an inch in the gales of laughter, the *attack* of laughter. It wasn't bourgeois society which collapsed after all, it was art.

In the light of the trick which has been played on us, it appears to us as if the contemporary artist were faced with two choices (since suicide is *not* a solution): on, to go on launching attack after attack, movement after movement, in the hope that one day (*soon*) “the thing” will have grown so weak, so *empty*, that it will evaporate & leave us suddenly alone in the field; or, two, to begin *right now immediately* live as if the battle were already won, as if *today* the artist were no longer a special kind of person, but each person a special sort of artist. (This is what the Situationists called “the suppression & realization of art”).

Both of these options are so “impossible” that to act on either of them would be a joke. We wouldn't have to make “funny” art because just making art would be funny enough to bust a gut. But at least it would be *our joke*. (Who can say for certain that we would fail? “I *love* not knowing the future”—Nietzsche. In order to begin to play this game, however, we shall probably have to set certain rules for ourselves:

1. There are no *issues*. There is no such thing as sexism, fascism, speciesism, looksism, or any other “franchise issue” which can be separated out from the social complex & treated with “discourse” as a “problem.” There exists only the *totality* which subsumes all these illusory “issues” into the complete falsity of *its* discourse, thus rendering all opinions, pro & con, into mere thought-commodities to be bought & sold. And this *totality* is itself an illusion, an evil nightmare from which we are trying (through art, or humor, or by any other means) to awaken.
2. As much as possible whatever we do must be done outside the psychic/economic structure set up by the *totality* as the permissible space for the game of art. How, you ask, are we to make a living without galleries, agents, museums, commercial publishing, the NEA, & other welfare agencies of the arts? Oh well, one need not ask for the improbable. But one must indeed demand the “impossible”—or else why the fuck is one an artist?! It's not enough to occupy a special holy catbird seat called Art from which to mock at the stupidity & injustice of the “square” world. Art is part of the problem. The Art World has its head up its ass, & it has become necessary to disengage—or else live in a landscape full of shit.
3. Of course one must go on “making a living” somehow—but the essential thing is to make a life. Whatever we do, whichever option we choose (perhaps all of them), or however badly we compromise, we should pray never to mistake art for life: Art is brief, Life is long. We should try to be prepared to drift, to nomadize, to slip out of all nets, to never settle down, to live through many arts, to make our lives better than our art, to make art our boast rather than our excuse.
4. The healing laugh (as opposed to the poisonous & corrosive laugh) can only arise from an art which is serious—*serious—but not sober*. Pointless morbidity, cynical nihilism, trendy postmodern frivolity, whining/bitching/moaning (the liberal cult of the “victim”), exhaustion, Baudrillardian ironic hyperconformity—none of these options is *serious* enough, & at the same time none is *intoxicated* enough to suit our purposes, much less elicit our laughter.

## “Raw Vision”

The categories of naive art, art brut, & insane or eccentric art, which shade into various & further categories of neo-primitive or urban-primitive art—all these ways of categorizing & labelling art remain senseless:—that is, not only ultimately useless but also essentially unsensual, unconnected to body & desire. What really characterizes all these art forms? Not their marginality in relation to a mainstream of art/discourse?! If we were to say that there’s a “post-modernist” discourse currently going on, then the concept “margin” no longer holds any meaning. Post-post-modernism, however, will not even admit the existence of any discourse of any sort. Art has fallen silent. There are no more categories, much less maps of “center” & “margin.” We are free of all that shit, right?

Wrong. Because one category survives: Capital. Too-Late Capitalism. The Spectacle, the Simulation, Babylon, whatever you want to call it. All art can be positioned or labelled in relation to this “discourse.” And it is *precisely & only* in relation to this “metaphysical” commodity-spectacle that “outsider” art must be called *im-mediate*. It does not pass thru the para-medium of the spectacle. It is meant only for the artist & the artist’s “immediate entourage” (friends, family, neighbors, tribe); & it participates only in a “gift” economy of positive reciprocity. Only this non-category of “Immediatism” can therefore approach an adequate understanding & defense of the *bodily* aspects of “outsider” art, its connection to the senses & to desire, & its avoidance or even ignorance of the mediation/alienation inherent in spectacular recuperation & reproduction. Mind you, this has nothing to do with the *content* of any outsider genre, nor for that matter does it concern the *form* or the intention of the work, nor the naivete or knowingness of the artist or recipients of the art. Its “Immediatism” lies solely in its means of *imaginal production*. It communicates or is “given” from person to person, “breast-to-breast” as the sufis say, without passing thru the distortion-mechanism of the spectacular para-medium.

When Yugoslavian or Haitian or NYC-graffiti art was “discovered” & commodified, the result failed to *satisfy* on several points:—(1) in terms of the pseudo-discourse of the “Art World,” all so-called “naivete” is doomed to remain quaint, even campy, & decidedly marginal—even when it commands high prices (for a year or two). The forced entrance of outsider art into the commodity spectacle is *a humiliation*. (2) Recuperation as commodity engages the artist in “negative reciprocity”—i.e., where first the artist “received inspiration” as a free gift, & then “made a donation” directly to other people, who might or might not “give back” their understanding, or mystification, or a turkey & a keg of beer (positive reciprocity), the artist now first creates for money & receives money, while any aspects of “gift” exchange recede into secondary levels of meaning & finally begin to fade (negative reciprocity). Finally we have *tourist* art, & the condescending amusement, & then the condescending boredom, of those who will no longer pay for the “inauthentic.” (3) Or else the Art World vampirizes the energy of the outsider, sucks everything out & then passes on the corpse to the advertising world or the world of “popular” entertainment. By this *reproduction* the art finally loses its “aura” & shrivels & dies. True, the “utopian trace” may remain, but in essence the art has been *betrayed*.

The *unfairness* of such terms as “insane” or “neo-primitive” art lies in the fact that this art is not produced only by the mad or innocent, but by all those who evade the alienation of the para-medium. Its true appeal lies in the intense aura it acquires thru immediate imaginal *presence*, not only in its “visionary” style or content, but most importantly by its mere present-ness (i.e., it is “here” & it is a “gift”). In this sense it is more, not less, noble than “mainstream” art of the post-modern era—which is precisely the art of an absence rather than a presence.

The only *fair* way (or “beauty way,” as the Hopi say) to treat “outsider” art would seem to be to keep it “secret”—to refuse to define it—to *pass it on* as a secret, person-to-person, breast-to-breast—rather than *pass it thru* the para-medium (slick journals, quarterlies, galleries, museums, coffee-table books, MTV, etc.). Or even better:—to become “mad” & “innocent” ourselves—for so Babylon will label us when we neither worship nor criticize it anymore—when we have *forgotten* it (but not “forgiven” it!), & remembered our own prophetic selves, our bodies, our “true will.”

# An Immediatist Potlatch

## i.

Any number can play but the number must be predetermined. Six to 25 seems about right.

## ii.

The basic structure is a banquet or picnic. Each player must bring a dish or bottle, etc., of sufficient quantity that everyone gets at least a serving. Dishes can be prepared or finished on the spot, but nothing should be bought ready-made (except wine & beer, although these could ideally be home-made). The more elaborate the dishes the better. Attempt to be *memorable*. The menu need not be left to surprise (although this is an option)—some groups may want to coordinate the banquets so as to avoid duplications or clashes. Perhaps the banquet could have a theme & each player could be responsible for a given course (appetizer, soup, fish, vegetables, meat, salad, dessert, ices, cheeses, etc.). Suggested themes: Fourier's Gastrosophy—Surrealism—Native American—Black & Red (all food black or red in honor of anarchy)—etc.

## iii.

The banquet should be carried out with a certain degree of formality: toasts, for example. Maybe "dress for dinner" in some way? (Imagine for example that the banquet theme were "Surrealism"; the concept "dress for dinner" takes on a certain meaning). Live music at the banquet would be fine, providing some of the players were content to perform for the others as their "gift," & eat later. (Recorded music is not appropriate.)

## iv.

The main purpose of the potlatch is of course gift-giving. Every player should arrive with one or more gifts & leave with one or more *different* gifts. This could be accomplished in a number of ways: (a) Each player brings one gift & passes it to the person seated next to them at table (or some similar arrangement); (b) Everyone brings a gift for *every* other guest. The choice may depend on the number of players, with (a) better for larger groups & (b) for smaller gatherings. If the choice is (b), you may want to decide beforehand whether the gifts should be the same or different. For example, if I am playing with five other people, do I bring (say) five hand-painted neckties, or five totally different gifts? And will the gifts be given specifically to certain individuals (in which case they might be crafted to suit the recipient's personality), or will they be distributed by lot?

**v.**

The gifts must be made by the players, not ready-made. This is vital. Premanufactured elements can go into the making of the gifts, but each gift must be an individual work of art in its own right. If for instance I bring five handpainted neckties, I must paint each one myself, either with the same or with different designs, although I may be allowed to buy ready-made ties to work on.

**vi.**

Gifts need not be physical objects. One player's gift might be live music during dinner, another's might be a performance. However, it should be recalled that in the Amerindian potlatches the gifts were supposed to be superb & even ruinous for the givers. In my opinion physical objects are best, & they should be *as good as possible*—not necessarily costly to make, but really impressive. Traditional potlatches involved prestige-winning. Players should feel a competitive spirit of giving, a determination to make gifts of real splendor or value. Groups may wish to set rules beforehand about this—some may wish to insist on physical objects, in which case music or performance would simply become extra acts of generosity, but *hors de potlatch*, so to speak.

**vii.**

Our potlatch is non-traditional, however, in that theoretically all players *win*—everyone gives & receives equally. There's no denying however that a dull or stingy player will lose prestige, while an imaginative and/or generous player will gain "face." In a really successful potlatch each player will be equally generous, so that all players will be equally pleased. The uncertainty of outcome adds a zest of randomness to the event.

**viii.**

The host, who supplies the place, will of course be put to extra trouble & expense, so that an ideal potlatch would be part of a series in which each player takes a turn as host. In this case another competition for prestige would transpire in the course of the series:—who will provide the most memorable hospitality? Some groups may want to set rules limiting the host's duties, while others may wish to leave hosts free to knock themselves out; however, in the latter case, there should really be a complete series of events, so that no one need feel cheated, or superior, in relation to the other players. But in some areas & for some groups the entire series may simply not be feasible. In New York for example not everyone has enough room to host even a small party. In this case the hosts will inevitably win some extra prestige. And why not?

**ix.**

Gifts should not be "useful." They should appeal to the senses. Some groups may prefer works of art, others might like home-made preserves & relishes, or gold frankincense & myrrh, or even



sexual acts. Some ground rules should be agreed on. No mediation should be involved in the gift—no videotapes, tape recordings, printed material, etc. All gifts should be present at the potlatch “ceremony”—i.e. no tickets to other events, no promises, no postponements. Remember that the purpose of the game, as well as its basic rule, is to avoid all mediation & even representation—to be “*present*,” to give “*presents*.”

# Silence

The problem is not that too much has been revealed, but that every revelation finds its sponsor, its CEO, its monthly slick, its clone Judases & replacement people.

You can't get sick from too much knowledge—but we *can* suffer from the virtualization of knowledge, its alienation from us & its replacement by a weird dull changeling or simulacrum—the same “data,” yes, but now dead—like supermarket vegetables; no “aura.”

Our malaise (January 1, 1992) arises from this: we hear not the language but the echo, or rather the reproduction ad infinitum of the language, its reflection upon a reflection-series of itself, even more self-referential & corrupt. The vertiginous perspectives of this VR datascape nauseate us because they contain no hidden spaces, no privileged opacities.

Infinite access to knowledge that simply fails to interact with the body or with the imagination—in fact the manichean ideal of fleshless soulless thought—modern media/politics as pure gnostic mentation, the anaesthetic ruminations of Archons & Aeons, suicide of the Elect...

The organic is secretive—it secretes secrecy like sap. The inorganic is a demonic democracy—everything equal, but equally valueless. No gifts, only commodities. The Manichaeans invented usury. Knowledge can act as a kind of poison, as Nietzsche pointed out.

Within the organic (“Nature,” “everyday life”) is embedded a kind of silence which is not just dumbness, an opacity which is not mere ignorance—a secrecy which is also an affirmation—a tact which knows how to act, how to change things, how to breathe into them.

Not a “cloud of unknowing”—not “mysticism”—we have no desire to deliver ourselves up again to that obscurantist sad excuse for fascism—nevertheless we might invoke a sort of taoist sense of “suchness-of-things”—“a flower does not talk,” & it's certainly not the genitals which endow us with logos. (On second thought, perhaps this is not quite true; after all, myth offers us the archetype of Priapus, a talking penis.) An occultist would ask how to “work” this silence—but we'd rather ask how to play it, like musicians, or like the playful boy of Heraclitus.

A bad mood in which every day is the same. When are a few lumps going to appear in this smooth time? Hard to believe in the return of Carnival, of Saturnalia. Perhaps time has stopped here in the Pleroma, here in the Gnostic dreamworld where our bodies are rotting but our “minds” are downloaded into eternity. We know so much—how can we not know the answer to this most vexing of questions?

Because the answer (as in Odilon Redon's “Harpocrates”) isn't answered in the language of reproduction but in that of gesture, touch, odor, the hunt. Finally *virtu* is impassable—eating & drinking is eating & drinking—the lazy yokel plows a crooked furrow. The Wonderful World of Knowledge has turned into some kind of PBS Special from Hell. I demand real mud in my stream, real watercress. Why, the natives are not only sullen, they're taciturn—downright incommunicative. Right,, gringo, we're tired of your steenking surveys, tests & questionnaires. There are some things bureaucrats were not meant to know—& so there are some things which even artists should keep secret. This is not self-censorship nor self-ignorance. It is cosmic tact. It is our homage to the organic, its uneven flow, its backcurrents & eddies, its swamps & hideouts. If art is “work”

then it will become knowledge & eventually lose its redemptive power & even its taste. But if art is “play” then it will both preserve secrets & tell secrets which will remain secrets. Secrets are for sharing, like all of Nature’s secretions. Is knowledge *evil*? We’re no mirror-image Manichees here—we’re counting on dialectics to break a few bricks. Some knowledge is dadata, some is commodata. Some knowledge is wisdom—some simply an excuse for doing nothing, desiring nothing. Mere academic knowledge, for example, or the knowingness of the nihilist post-mods, shades off into realms of the UnDead—& the UnBorn. Some knowledge breathers—some knowledge suffocates. What we know & how we know it must have a basis in the flesh—the whole flesh, not just a brain in a jar of formaldehyde. The knowledge we want is neither utilitarian nor “pure” but celebratory. Anything else is a totentanz of data-ghosts, the “beckoning fair ones” of the media, the Cargo Cult of too-Late Capitalist epistemology.

If I could escape this bad mood of course I’d do so, & take you with me. What we need is a plan. Jail break? tunnel? a gun carved of soap, s sharpened spoon, a file in a cake? a new religion?

Let me be your wandering bishop. We’ll play with the silence & make it ours. Soon as Spring comes. A rock in the stream, bifurcating its turbulence. Visualize it: mossy, wet, viridescent as rainy jadefaded copper struck by lightning. A great toad like a living emerald, like Mayday. The strength of the *bios*, like the strength of the bow or lyre, lies in the *bending back*.

## Critique of the Listener

To speak too much & not be heard—that's sickening enough. But to acquire *listeners*—that could be worse. Listeners think that to listen suffices—as if their true desire were to hear with someone else's ears, see thru someone else's eyes, feel with someone else's skin...

The text (or the broadcast) which will change reality:—Rimbaud dreamed of that & then gave up in disgust. But he entertained too subtle an idea about magic. The crude truth is perhaps that texts can only change reality when they inspire readers to *see & act*, rather than merely *see*. Scripture once did this—but Scripture has become an idol. To see thru its eyes would be to possess (in the Voodoo sense) a statue—or a corpse.

Seeing, & the literature of seeing, is too easy. Enlightenment is easy. "It's easy to be a sufi," a Persian shaykh once told me. What's difficult is to be human. Political enlightenment is even easier than spiritual enlightenment—neither one changes the world or even the self. Sufism & Situationism—or shamanism & anarchy—the theories I've played with—are just that: theories, visions, ways of seeing. Significantly, the practice of sufism consists in the repetition of words (dhikr). This action itself is a text, & nothing but a text. And the "praxis" of anarcho-situationism amounts to the same: a text, a slogan on a wall. A moment of enlightenment. Well it's not totally valueless—but afterwards what will be *different*?

We might like to purge our radio of anything which lacks at least the *chance* of precipitating that difference. Just as there exist books which have inspired earthshaking crimes we would like to broadcast texts which cause hearers to seize (or at least make a grab for) the happiness God denies us. Exhortations to hijack reality. But even more we would like to purge our lives of everything which obstructs or delays us from setting out—not to sell guns & slaves in Abyssinia—not to be either robbers or cops—not to escape the world or to rule it—but to open ourselves to difference.

I share with the most reactionary moralists the presumption that art can really affect reality in this way, & I despise the liberals who say all art should be permitted because—after all—it's only art. Thus I've taken to the practice of those categories of writing & radio most hated by conservatives—pornography & agitprop—in the hope of stirring up trouble for my readers/hearers & myself. But I accuse myself of ineffectualism, even futility. Not enough has changed. Perhaps nothing has changed.

Enlightenment is all we have, & even that we've had to rip from the grasp of corrupt gurus & bumbling suicidal intellectuals. As for our art—what have we accomplished, other than to spill our blood for the ghostworld of fashionable ideas & images?

Writing has taken us to the very edge beyond which writing may be impossible. Any texts which could survive the plunge over this edge—into whatever abyss or Abyssinia lies beyond—would have to be virtually self-created, like the miraculous hidden-treasure Dakini-scrolls of Tibet or the tadpole-script spirit-texts of Taoism—& absolutely incandescent, like the last screamed messages of a witch or heretic burning at the stake (to paraphrase Artaud).

I can sense these texts trembling just beyond the veil.

What if the mood should strike us to renounce both the mere objectivity of art & the mere subjectivity of theory? to risk the abyss? What if no one followed? So much the better, perhaps—we might find our equals amongst the Hyperboreans. What if we went mad? Well—that's the risk. What if we were bored? Ah...

Already some time ago we placed all our bets on the irruption of the marvelous into everyday life—won a few, then lost heavily. Sufism was indeed much much easier. Pawn everything then, down to the last miserable scrawl? double our stakes? cheat?

It's as if there were angels in the next room beyond thick walls—arguing? fucking? One can't make out a single word.

Can we retain ourselves at this late date to become Finders of hidden treasure? And by what technique, seeing that it is precisely technique which has betrayed us? Derrangement of the senses, insurrection, piety, poetry? *Knowing how* is a cheap mountebank's trick. But *knowing what* might be like divine self-knowledge—it might create *ex nihilo*.

Finally, however, it will become necessary to leave this city which hovers immobile on the edge of a sterile twilight, like Hamelin after all the children were lured away. Perhaps other cities exist, occupying the same space & time, but...different. And perhaps there exist jungles where mere enlightenment is outshadowed by the black light of jaguars. I have no idea—& I'm terrified.

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Hakim Bey  
Immediatism  
1994

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# Millennium

Hakim Bey

1996

# Contents

<b>Part 1: Interview with Hakim Bey</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part 2: Millennium</b>	<b>12</b>
Chapter 1: JIHAD	13
Chapter 2: SAMENESS	14
Chapter 3: MANAGEMENT OF DESIRES	15
Chapter 4: GREEN SHADE	16
Chapter 5: CASH	17
Chapter 6: ASSAULT ON THE SCREEN	19
Chapter 7: THE MORALITY OF VIOLENCE	20
Chapter 8: FIN DE SIECLE	21
Chapter 9: THE REVOLT OF ISLAM	22
Chapter 10: VOLKWAYS	23
Chapter 11: REVOLUTIONARY SOTERIOLOGY	25
Chapter 12: THE HIDDEN IMAM	26
Chapter 13: CALL & RESPONSE	27
<b>Part 3: For and Against Interpretation</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Part 4: Religion and Revolution</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Part 5: Note on Nationalism</b>	<b>41</b>



## **Part 1: Interview with Hakim Bey**

[A longer version appears as a preface to the German translation of *Immediatism*]

10 July 1996,

New York — Vienna

(by phone)

Q: [The first questions concern the book *Immediatism* (a.k.a. *Radio Sermonettes*) and readers' response to it]:

A: Of course it's meant as a discussion of what people do rather than what people *should* do. I'm not interested in preaching, and I don't think myself a guru in any sense. More than that, in this particular book I really meant to describe what I considered to be the revolutionary potential of everyday life, to put it in Situationist terms. The response has been pretty good — I mean I don't get hundreds of letters or anything, but I do get lots of letters, and I do get lots of response — and it seems to strike a chord especially with people in the arts, which is who it was meant for really. I mean, when I say people in the arts that could be anybody, not just professional artists; it could be anyone who feels a necessity for creative action in their life. My idea was to define a space which I feel exists (anyway), that's a private, even secret space, if you like... clandestine... in which the whole problem of commodification, the buying and selling of art, the turning of art into a commodity and the use of art to sell commodities, which is sort of a curse to the modern artist, is avoided, just plain avoided; just a withdrawal from that world and a reaffirmation of a creative power in everyday life, outside the life of commodity, the life of the market. After all, this is why all artists are artists, this is why one becomes an artist — not to sell your soul to the company store but to create.

Q: Is there a lot of media interest in what you do? — because somehow the Disappearing One could attract lots of attention, and the one who places a critique could become himself very interesting for the media. How would that circle work for you?

A: You're absolutely right, but it has not really worked that way. It's true that TAZ ["The Temporary Autonomous Zone"] was part of a book which caused a little bit of a stir in underground circles or whatever, there was some publicity involved in this, but in the first place I don't seek publicity for myself — I'm not interested in establishing some sort of personality cult. I really would like to be invisible. Actually, it was probably a mistake to use an exotic name to write this material. It does actually draw curiosity and attention instead of just being accepted as a pseudonym. So there was a little bit of media attention but not very much, and one reason for that is that in America nothing reaches the media unless it's commodification. This is all the media is interested in, something which can sell products. And there's no product to be sold here other than a small cheap book or two. In Europe things are slightly different, there is perhaps one may say a remnant of a public intelligentsia — which we don't have here. We really do not have that here. We have some famous writers, who get published in all the journals, and then we have masses of people who are probably far more intelligent, far more creative, but who are not seen in the media and therefore are not seen to exist — sometimes even in their own eyes, and this is why I'm writing a book like *Immediatism*: to emphasize to the artist and the creative people that they do exist, they should exist in their own eyes, so what they do is important, even politically important; even though it happens outside the mass media in a sense is a blessing, not a curse. Things are slightly different in Europe perhaps for these reasons, but in America there's been very little crossover between my world and the world of media — and when I say

that I don't even mean magazines and newspapers. I'm not even talking about television and advertising that are really mass media. I'm talking just about local newspapers. They're just not interested. There's no interest in political radicalism in intellectual circles in America, and I think it would be fair to say that — no interest whatsoever.

**Q:** In your text, you mentioned a certain psychic martial art and the return of the Paleolithic in the sense of a psychic technology which we forgot. Can you explain that?

**A:** Well, I'm really not trying to be so mysterious or to imply that there's a secret art which I know and which I'm not sharing. Why I called it a secret martial art is that it's simply secret because it's ignored or forgotten. What I mean to say is that living in the body, being aware of the positivity of the material bodily principle (to quote Bakhtin) is in fact a form of resistance, a martial art, if you will. In a world where the body is so degraded, so de-emphasized on the one hand by the empire of the image and on the other hand where the body is degraded by a kind of obsessive narcissism, athletics, fashion, and health, that somewhere in between these extremes to me is the ordinary body which, as the Zen masters would say, is the Zen body, to rephrase the saying that the ordinary mind is the Zen mind. To be conscious and aware of this is already to take a stance of resistance against the obliteration of the body in media or the pseudo-apotheosis of the body in modern sports, or fast food or all this kind of degradation of the body which occurs along with its erasure. So what would that art be I don't know exactly, I think it would be different for each person maybe, and certainly involve a kind of physical creativity that I discuss in the essays. Unfortunately, I haven't got it down to a science yet that could be taught in dojos and you get a black belt in it. It hasn't occurred yet, although perhaps some genius will come along and invent it.

**Q:** Do you get many invitations to parties that are strange for you or really come as a surprise because of who identifies with your stuff? Can you give examples?

**A:** I'll just give you one example. I was invited by a ceremonial magician who lives in a medieval castle in the south of France to come and see his museum of occult art. And this was simply as a result of reading my work and corresponding with me for a while. It was great. I won't give his address, though.

**Q:** There's a lot of frank non-pessimism in what you write, and there's one chapter in your book about laughter as either a weapon or medicine. I was wondering who the people who would communicate this sort of healing laughter might be?

**A:** First of all, there's an existential choice involved here. I've always thought that literature should be entertaining as well as instructive — a very old-fashioned idea but one that I adhere to. When I set out to write in this way — particularly in this way, a political way, if you want to call it that — I intend to make a donation, to try to give something. There doesn't seem to me to be any point in giving more misery or exacerbating unhappiness through some kind of hyper-intellectual, pyrotechnical writing about unhappiness and the shit that we all find ourselves in. That's been done plenty. I think first of all that it doesn't need to be done any more and second of all there's a kind of reactionary aspect to it which is that the emphasizing of misery without any anti-pessimism, as you put it, would be simply seduction into inactivity and political despair. In other words, to do politics at all on any level, especially on a revolutionary or on an insurrectionary level, there has to be some anti-pessimism — I won't say optimism because that sounds so fatuous, futile; but anti-pessimism is a nice phrase. And there's a deliberate attempt at that in the writing. Then again it's a matter of my personality, I guess, inclined towards the notion of the healing laugh to some extent. We have an anarchist thinker in America, John Zerzan, who

wrote an essay against humor which maybe is one of the things I was reacting against. Even if irony is counter-revolutionary which I think it might be to a certain extent I don't see any way in which you could say that laughter itself is counter-revolutionary. This doesn't make any sense to me unless you mean to get rid of language and thought altogether, which is just another form of nihilism. So as long as you're going to accept culture on some level you're certainly going to have to accept humor. And as long as you're going to have to accept humor you might as well see humor as potentially revolutionary. [...]

I'm actually not out to raise a lot of laughs. Humor can indeed become counter-revolutionary if it's simply exalted out of all proportion and made into the purpose or center of one's art. Well, this could perhaps be considered frivolity. Again, I would say that it's part of that natural martial art of the ordinary mind and body, it's just something that is, and therefore should be celebrated as part of existence.

**Q:** Palimpsest.

**A:** The whole idea behind palimpsest was to get over the fetish of the single original philosophy, the origin of single philosophies or the philosophy of single origins. I don't think that we should throw the idea of origins out the window, as for example is done in certain post-structuralist thinkers, or indeed really across the board in modern scientific discourse. In other words, origins are mythological, and comparative mythology still has a great deal to teach us, obviously. We still live in a world which generates mythology, even though people don't realize it. So origins are important, whether for positive or negative reasons, and my idea of the palimpsest was that it inscribes origins upon origins, and every origin that is potentially interesting should be added to the text, and although I don't literally write on top of writing — although it might be an interesting experiment — I do sort of encourage the readers to try to stack these origins or conceptual elements up in their minds as they read, and try to entertain them simultaneously. As the Red Queen told Alice in Wonderland, you have to entertain six impossible ideas before breakfast. This seem to me to be the best way to read. So there's that, but then on the other hand there's spontaneity, there's improvisation, there's the outflow of the moment, and so on, all of which are very important. But you know, I grew up in an era when improvisation really took over avantgarde art, especially theater and music and so forth, and I don't think the results were always very positive. When you improvise in a performance situation and you're not on, you're not brilliant, the results are totally disastrous, whereas at least if you had a plan, if you had some kind of structure that you're working with to begin with, you could at least turn it into a decent performance that would decently entertain everybody. So I tend to steer clear of improvisation as a principle, unless it's connected to really exalted consciousness in some department or another. Perhaps personally I tend more towards the palimpsest than to improvisation. I wouldn't necessarily want to separate them as a body-mind split.

Noise might even be a better concept than improvisation.

**(C. Loidl):** Since I had the good fortune to meet you every now and then, I wonder what your mind is right now dwelling on. You always seem to be quite a bit ahead of your publications.

**(H. Bey):** I'm glad you asked. It's been over ten years since *TAZ* was written and about five years since I worked on those essays on immediatism and I think quite a lot has changed. I'm just now working on an essay "Millenium" to try to update some of my thinking. Basically, I've recently come to feel that the collapse of the Communist world between 1989 and 1991 really marks the end of the century, so to speak. Of course, these are artificial divisions in history, but it still makes a kind of convenient way of thinking of it. And it's really taken me five years

personally to figure out the implications of that for my own thinking. And the way I would express it now is that in TAZ and the Radio Sermonettes I was really proposing a third position, a position that was neither Capitalism nor Communism. This is basically, you could say, something that all Anarchist philosophy does. In this period I was telling it in my own way. It's a neither/nor position. It's a third position. Now, however, when you come to think about it, there are not two worlds any more or two possibilities or two contending opposing forces. There is in fact only one world, and that's the world of global capital. The world order, the world market, too-late capitalism, whatever you wanna call it, is now alone and triumphant. It's determinedly triumphant. It knows it's the winner although really it's only the winner by default, I think. And it tends to transform the world in its image. And that image, of course, is a monoculture based on Hollywood, on Disney, on commodities, on the destruction of the environment in every sense, from trees to imaginations, and the turning of all that into commodity, the turning of all that into money and the turning of money itself into a gnostic phantom-like experience which exists outside the world somewhere in a mysterious sphere of its own where money circulates, never descends, never reaches you and me. So what we're looking at is one single world. Obviously this one single world is not going to go without its revolution, it's not going to go without its opposition, And in fact it's around the word revolution that my thoughts are circulating now, because it seems to me that anarchists and anti-authoritarians in general can no longer occupy this third position; because how can you occupy a third position when there is no longer a second position? We can't talk about the Third World any more for the one reason that there's no second world. So even this third world as it used to be is now simply just the slums of the one world. It's just the no-go zone of that one single unified world of Capital. Obviously the communists are not going to step back into the position of opposition. Political Communism has completely shot its load, it's made itself look bad, taste bad in the mouth of history. No-one is calling on authoritarian Marxism to step back into this position of opposition. So where is this opposition supposed to come from? In my mind, first of all, this implies that if we're no longer trying to occupy a third position outside of this dichotomy, then WE are the opposition. Whether we know it or like it or not, we are the opposition. Now, who is we? For me the important thing is the realization that I have a new relation to the word revolution, whereas before I was inclined to look on it as a historical phantom, as in fact the lie told by Communism as opposed to the lie told by Capitalism. And whereas before I was extremely distrustful of the leftist dogma of revolution as opposed to the uprising or the insurrection, I would now say that history forces me once again to have to consider the idea of revolution and of myself as revolutionary and of my theory as revolutionary theory, because the opposition to the one world is already quite real. There is no way in which this triumph of capital can really & truly be a monolithic triumph excluding all difference from the world in the name of its sameness. And it looks to me like the revolutionary force in the single world of sameness has to be difference: revolutionary difference. And at the same time since the single world is involved, since the one world of capital is the world of separation, of alienation, that along with revolutionary difference it also has to be revolutionary presence (used to be called solidarity, although this is a word that presents some difficulties; I'd prefer simply the word "presence" as opposed to separation or absence.) So, I would say that the revolution of the present is a revolution for difference and for presence. It's opposed to sameness and separation. And as I look around the world to see where there might be arising a natural militant organisational form that speaks to this condition, the one shining example that I might be able to come up with would be the Zapatistas in Mexico, defending their right to be different, essentially. They want

to be left alone in peace to be Mayan Indians, but they're not forcing anybody else to become Mayan Indians. They're not even suggesting it. They are different, but they're in solidarity with all those people around the world who have come to support them, because their message is very new, it's very fresh and it attracts a lot of people: the idea that one can be different and revolutionary, that one can fight for social justice without the shadow of Moscow continually poisoning every action, etc. This is something new in the world. *The New York Times* called it the first postmodern revolution, which was simply their sneering ironical way of trying to dismiss it, but in fact when you think about it, it is the first revolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the terms that I began with, saying that we're already at the beginning of a new century, we're already if you like at the beginning of a millennium. And I expect to see many many more phenomena such as the Zapatistas. I would say that Bosnia potentially could have been such a phenomenon, not in the sense of an ethnic particularity like the Mayans, but in the sense of a pluralistic particularity: a small society where people were different but wanted to live together in peace. And this was seen to be perhaps even more dangerous than the Zapatista model, which is why in my view it was destroyed. It's possible that Bosnia may never be able to recreate itself again in the utopian way that it dreamed of in 1991. But that moment was there, and I think it has great significance for us. So, this to me is the line of the future. I think we have to reconsider all our priorities, we have to realize that militancy is once again a very important concept. This is not to say that I have any plan of march. I don't know what armies to join and am always suspicious of joining any army. But things have definitely changed. I'm embarrassed that it took me so long to figure it out. I don't think many people have really caught on to this yet. In fact, the fact that we still use words like "Third World" means that the popular language has not realized what happened in 1989–1991. So, the first goal is simply to try to raise consciousness about this and that's what I hope to do in the near future.

(D. Ender): Do you see any tangible effects of this lack of opposition in the USA?

(H. Bey): Oh yes, absolutely. The most tangible thing, and I think really the thing which gave me the clue to think about this, is precisely a psychic condition. One could point to lots of economic or social factors, but above all I feel a psychic malaise that is something quite new, and, well, a few years ago I began noticing in public speaking that there was a great deal less response on the part of audiences. You would get audiences that would sit there quite passively looking at you as if you were on television. And if questions came, they were very likely to be questions such as "Tell us what to do". You know when people ask you this sort of question they have no intention of actually taking your advice. What they're doing to trying to fill up some hole in themselves. So I thought, first of all it's just the influence of TV that's been around since 1947 or whatever, but then I realized that that's not a sufficient explanation for this kind of strange passivity. And I began hearing about it from other people who are involved in public speaking and then finally I read a whole section about it in Noam Chomsky's latest book. He has exactly the same experience of audiences, and all of these experiences begin around 1989, 1991. What I think has happened to us is not just TV. TV is just a symptom. So, what's happening is a kind of cognitive collapse around this single world. When people no longer feel a possibility in the world, a possibility of another position, then they become consciously opposed to the one. And conscious opposition is extremely difficult in an atmosphere that's completely poisoned by media such that no oppositional voice is ever really heard. Unless you yourself make the effort to get down to the alternative media, where that voice is still feebly speaking, then you're left simply in this one world of sameness and separation. Sameness — everything is the same; separation — every

individual is separated from every other individual; complete alienation, complete unity. And I think that on the unconscious level, on the level of images, on the mythological level, on the religious level if you wanna put it that way, this is what's happening, especially in America. I can't really speak of other places to the same degree. I've traveled in other countries, but one never has the sense of other countries the way one has the sense of one's own country. But I would imagine that it's a world-wide phenomenon — this kind of capitulation to the mono-culture on the deepest psychic level. So, yeah, it was in fact this sign which began to bother me to the point where I had to think my way through this problem of the one world, the two worlds, the three worlds and the revolutionary world. By no means have I finished thinking about it, but I recently had this — to me — this breakthrough about the word "revolution". So I see that as the only way to break through this particular wall of glass, this screen, yeah, to break through the screen.

C.L.: Sounds like a conclusion almost.

H.B.: Well, if you wish.

C.L.: No, not that I wish... When you talk about one or two or three or opposition and so on, I get totally contrary images to that in my head, because Europe right now and the further you go East in the Old World Europe, you see how it all has collapsed into little, almost tribal, very chauvinistic entities of people trying frantically to survive — the mafia is the very model — from that point of view and also from your talking about Too-Late Capitalism, I'd like to have an image of yours for how Europe as the EC or EU, which we're sitting right inside of right now, presents itself from over there.

H.B.: Well, obviously, especially from the breakdown of Communism you're going to get this smashing up into many little pieces. But it's more than that. We have to realize that difference is the organic revolutionary response to sameness and all of these splinter societies that you speak of consciously or unconsciously are revolutionary. Now, in the case of the Zapatistas or the Bosnians, let's say, this is a positive kind of revolution that we could support perhaps. In the case of the Serbians, it's something else. It's a conservative revolution, perhaps even a fascistic revolution. It's not really "nationalism", it's a form of ethnic imperialism. The point is that people are going to be emphasizing difference. Look at it this way: If you have your own culture, let's say it would be Bosnian Muslim or Finnish or Celtic or Ashanti or some tribal culture — this is going to become more and more precious to you as a source and a site of difference. This is where the difference is for you. It's in language, it's in cuisine, it's in art, it's in all of these things. The difference is that difference does not have to be hegemonistic or fascistic. And this is going to be extremely difficult for the old leftists to realize, because the old left itself had an ideal of a single world culture — secular, rationalistic, you know, totally illumined, no shadows, industry, proletariat, forward into the future, basically extremely hegemonistic towards differences. Yes, they had their little Uzbeki folk-dancers, but this is simply a spectacle of difference, it's not true difference. And we have the same thing: we have 600 channels — choose one! There's a channel for everybody. Is this difference? No. This is not really difference. This is just sameness disguised as difference. But true organic integral difference is revolutionary, now. It has to be, because it's opposed to the single world, the mono-world, the mono-culture of capital. So, we have to choose and we have to influence other people's choices to go for an anti-hegemonistic particularity rather than a hegemonistic particularity. In other words, take the Zapatistas again as a model here. As I said, they are not asking other people to become Mayan Indians. They are simply saying, "This is our difference. This is revolutionary for us. We are defending it." So it seems to me that what's happening in Europe on the one hand is this shattering into all of these fragments, which

is a situation where political consciousness becomes extremely difficult. On the other hand, you have things like the EEU, which is simply, in my mind, symptomatic of capitalist mono-culture. So I guess that would mean, although I would have to think about this very carefully, I would say that a revolutionary stance in Europe would be anti-EEU. I think it would have to be, because the thing that we have to preserve is an ecology, you know. An ecology of mind and body implies difference. It implies difference in a state of balance — balance which can even include conflict. If you look at tribal societies, they are not necessarily peaceful societies. But the idea of war to the extinction of all individual desire — this is the monopoly of triumphant capital. And I think that it behooves us — we have to rethink our position if we consider ourselves as leftists of some sort or part of the leftist tradition in some way. We have to really seriously re-think our view of what revolutionary difference is, what it really could be. So, this to me is all inevitable. What's going on in Eastern Europe is inevitable and is potentially revolutionary. If it gets bogged down into conservative revolution and neo-fascism, this would be the great tragedy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but I don't think it's strictly speaking necessary. There is such a thing as revolutionary particularity. And as far as Eastern Europe goes, I would mention not only Bosnia as a failure, but maybe some other small enclaves as possible successes, you know. The anarchists in Ljubljana, they seem to be doing quite interesting things. It's a small enough country where they could have some real influence. So, interesting times ahead, not doubt about it.

C.L.: Yeah. I wish I could share your outlook on that.

H.B.: Go ahead and argue with me, because —

C.L.: No, no. What I saw much more was the latter part of what you said — the conservative capitalist revival in all those countries like Lithuania and Romania and so on. There was sort of a resistance spirit there, while there were those authoritarian governments. And now that those collapsed, it's like the Dollar is the main authority for everyone and it's everyone against everyone, and it's very hard to see anything revolutionary in that. Except that it looks like something very self-defeating.

H.B.: I agree with you, but Eastern Europe is the ideological battleground where capital wants to parade its triumph, where capital is determined to convert everybody. And of course, there's no doubt about it that sixty years of Communism made everybody extremely exhausted.

C.L.: And left them backwards also mentally. People have just been deprived of all sorts of information.

H.B.: I know exhaustion, but at the same time when I meet bright people from Eastern Europe, young intellectuals, punks, anarchists and so forth, I get the feeling of a kind of freshness of approach that's lacking in Western Europeans and Americans; because they were out of the loop for so long, because there is a certain perhaps even naivete based on (laughter) ignorance. This can be turned into a kind of strength, too, in a paradoxical way. I mean, at conferences that I went to last year in Europe which mostly concerned the Internet and communication theory, always without exception the most interesting people were from Eastern Europe. They had the most to say, they had the most energy, the most creative ideas etc. etc. etc. So I don't think it's a totally grim and hopeless situation. I think that the power of international capital is very much focussed on that part of the world right now. So, resistance is extremely important. I think that it's a top priority for Americans and Western Europeans to show every kind of support for resistance in Eastern Europe. Whether it's going to work or not, who knows, you know. But what else have we got to do?



David Ender  
Jack Hauser  
Christian Loidl

## **Part 2: Millennium**

# Chapter 1: JIHAD

When two set out to dine or duel together a third appears — tertium quid, parasite, witness, prophet, escapee. [see M.Serres, *Hermes*.]

Five years ago it still remained possible to occupy a third position in the world, a neither/nor of refusal or slyness, a realm outside the dialectic — even a space of withdrawal; — disappearance as will to power.

But now there is only one world — triumphant “end of History”, end of the unbearable pain of imagination — actually an apotheosis of cybernetic Social Darwinism. Money decrees itself a law of Nature, and demands absolute liberty. Completely spiritualized, freed from its outworn body (mere production), circulating toward infinity & instantaneity in a gnostic numisphere far above Earth, money alone will define consciousness. The 20<sup>th</sup> century ended five years ago; this is the millenium. Where there is no second, no opposition, there can be no third, no neither/nor. So the choice remains: — either we accept ourselves as the “last humans”, or else we accept ourselves as the opposition. (Either automonotony — or autonomy.) All positions of withdrawal must be re-considered from a point of view based on new strategic demands. In a sense, we’re cornered. As the oldtime ideologues would have said, our situation is “objectively pre-revolutionary” again. Beyond the temporary autonomous zone, beyond the insurrection, there is the necessary revolution — the “jihad.”

## Chapter 2: SAMENESS

21<sup>st</sup> century money is a chaos — while 20<sup>th</sup> century ideology was merely an entropy. Both bourgeois & anti-bourgeois thought proposed a single world — unified in consciousness by science — but money alone will actually achieve that world.

Money is not migratory, for the nomad moves from place to place while money moves from time to time, obliterating space. Money is not a rhizome but a chaos, an interdimensionality, inorganic but reproductive [infinite regressive bifurcation] — the sexuality of the dead.

“Capital,” then, must be considered a “strange attractor.” Perhaps the very mathematics of this money (“out of control”) could already be traced in such esoteric webs as SWIFT, the private internet for banks and arbitrage houses, where a trillion dollars a day disports itself in cyberspace (and less than 5% of it refers even obliquely to actual production).

The one world can deal with “chaos,” but it reduces all true complexity to sameness & separation. Consciousness itself “enters into representation”; lived experience which demands presence must be denied lest it threaten to constitute another world beyond enclosure. In a heaven of imagery there persists only the afterlife of the screen, the gnostic stargate, the glass of disembodiment. Infinitely the same within an infinity of enclosures; infinitely connected yet infinitely alone. Immeasurable identity of desire, immeasurable distance of realization.

## Chapter 3: MANAGEMENT OF DESIRES

The one world cannot package pleasure itself but only its image; malign hermeticism, a kind of *baraka* in reverse, the event horizon or terminal of desire. The “spirituality of pleasure” lies precisely in a presence that cannot be represented without disappearing; — inexpressible, unimpeachable, possible only in that “economy of the gift” that always exists (or is always re-invented) beneath the orthodoxy and paralysis of exchange. Desire is defined here as movement along such a trajectory — not as the itch that money can scratch.

Radical theory has recently developed a problematic of desire based on the perception that Capital is concerned with desire and able to satisfy it. Desire therefore is selfish and reactionary. But Benjamin has already shown that Capital’s concern is precisely not to satisfy desire (i.e. to provide pleasure) but to exacerbate longing through the device of the “utopian trace” (the metaphysical shenanigans of the commodity, to paraphrase Marx). To say that capital liberates desire is a semantic absurdity based on a “mistranslation”: — Capital liberates itself by enslaving desire. Fourier claimed that the twelve Passions — unrepressed — constitute the only possible basis for social Harmony. We may not follow his numerology, but we catch his drift.

Against the negative hermetism of the one world and its sham carnality, opposition proposes a gnosis of its own, a dialogics of presence, the pleasure of overcoming the representation of pleasure — a kind of touchstone. Not censorship, not management of the image, but the reverse — the liberation of the imagination from the empire of the image, from its overbearing omnipresence and singularity. The image alone is tasteless, like a bioindustrial tomato or pear — odorless as civilization itself, our “society of safety”, our culture of mere survival. Ours is partly a struggle against colonial hearing & imperial gaze, and for smell, touch, taste — and for the “third eye”.

If desire has disappeared into its representations then it must be rescued. Silence & secrecy are demanded, even a veiling of the image — ultimately a reenchantment of the forbidden. Only an eros that moves toward escape from enclosure within the banality of the image (and here, consciousness scarcely matters) can harmonize with the aesthetic of the jihad; whether it be expressed in conventional or unconventional roles or acts seems almost irrelevant.

Sexuality itself can be considered entheogenic — like the “sacred plants”, it can provide not only cognitive structure but also imaginal content. The festal for us is at least a “serious joke” [an old definition of alchemy] if not a ritual necessity. “Enlightenment” is also a material bodily principle — and our secret is that our project need not be built exclusively on Nietzsche’s nothing.

## Chapter 4: GREEN SHADE

Wild(er)ness stands for this very irreducibility of desire. The elimination of the non-human invokes the elimination of the human; culture can only be defined in relation to what it is not. Herein lies the profundity of paganism; in Islam, green is a heraldic color because “water, greenery & a beautiful face” (as the Prophet said) are ontologically privileged in experience — and are in fact the basis of the esoteric rejection of sameness & separation — the divine as difference, immanent & immediate — not only in “Nature” but even in the garden or city as spontaneous organic crystallization of life’s desire for itself. Perhaps all “real” wilderness has been disappeared into a cartomantic management of desires — after all, the one world knows no other — but if so, then its spectre haunts that world. It can be called back; it can be restored.

If Nature is de-natured in mediation’s murderous museological gaze and if “everything” is mediated (even “direct sensory perception”), then how can we speak of restoration or of “immediacy”? First, because (in another manner of speaking) not everything has “entered into representation”. The claim of the one world to its oneness is of course spurious — there persists by definition an outside to every enclosure in representation; not to mention a liminality around every border, an area of ambiguity. Oneness represents itself as invulnerable — but its weakness is revealed precisely in the moment of our perception that it is not reflected in lived experience; it shows itself in dislocation, hollowness, boredom, immiseration — this moment might constitute the “rending of the veil” that would allow a glimpse of the future, or at least of our desire for the future.

Second: we can speak here of restoration because not even every representation subsumed or produced within the enclosure of oneness can be considered effective in the service of repression. Language itself is haunted by the (sometimes unintentional) poetics of its own self-overcoming, by the subversive, the “eruption of the marvellous”. Life seems to conspire with this outsideness, such that even representation finally escapes representation.

## Chapter 5: CASH

Green is made to symbolize the damned fertility of money, its contranatural fecundity — the alchemy of expropriation, the infinite weight of the privileged & Masonic gaze. In transcending its own textuality it becomes pure representation; from the very beginning however, from the first clay tokens or coins of electrum, money was already nothing but debt, nothing but absence.

Money “itself” retains a certain innocence as a simple medium of exchange — “poor” money, so to speak, stripped of interest in sheer circulation. At this level money might play its role even in the temporary autonomous zone; in relation to the jihad however money remains and must be considered under the sign of Capital as the measure of expropriation and the basic mytheme of separation.

And as money transcends its textuality in virtuality, interest can be extracted from each transaction, each disturbance of the aether; — “poor” money gives way to “pure” money. Who benefits?

The global machinery will never fall ripely into the hands of the insurgent masses, nor will its single Eye pass to the people (as if to one of three blind Fates); there will be no transition, smooth or bumpy, between Capitalism & some economic utopia, some miraculous salvation for the unified consciousness of post Enlightenment rationalism & universal culture (with cozy corners for eccentric survivals & touristic bliss) — no Social Democracy taking over the controls in the name of the people. The “money-power” (as the old agrarians called it) is not in the power of an elite (wether conspiratorial or sociological) — rather the elite is in the power of money, like the hired human lackeys of some sci-fi AI entity in cyberspace. Money-power is the global machinery — it can only be dismantled, not inherited. Will some sort of theoretical limit appear in the numisphere, so that the bubble bursts “on its own” as it were? Is Capitalism headed for the last round-up & final crisis to end all crises, or will it find a way to deal with & even profit by any “limits to growth” or chaotic perturbations within its closed atmosphere of suffocation? [Stay Tuned.] In any case (to evoke Gustav Landauer) there is no “historical inevitablity” about a revolution reborn in the very moment of Capital’s triumphant closure of the dialectic.

[In one sense Capitalism seems to become “inevitable” in the invention of scarcity — the first moment of expropriation. But where precisely is this moment to be located? Agriculture is a great long-drawn-out crisis — but many horticultural-tribal societies remain as staunchly non-authoritarian & gift-oriented as the purest hunter/gatherers. Ancient hierarchic states (Sumer, Egypt, Shang China, etc.) and even feudalism still retain economies of reciprocity & redistribution; — the Market, as “predicted” by Classical Economics, simply fails to appear (see Karl Polyani). Moreover, every threat of its emergence is met with prescient resistance (as Clastres might have predicted): — separation & expropriation never go uncontested, and thus never appear in their absolute form. There exists in fact no natural law of circulation & exchange, no historical fatality, no destined atomicity of the social, and no unified world of representation. Capitalism exists — but not alone; revolution is its other. And vice versa.]

There is never a correct moment for declaring oneself in a state of rebellion. Perennial heretics, we have already made our choices — as if in some previous incarnation, or in some mythic time

out of time, as if everything rethinks itself in us or without us, and refusal were a kind of tepid pre-death, a resignation in morbidity. There is for us no return to innocence in the ecstasy of 600 channels, some dating back to the so-called “Fall of the Roman Empire” or even the early Neolithic. The very first emergences of separation in the earliest forms of money & the State crested for us a tradition now some 10,000 years old — ultimately it doesn’t matter whether “this is the crisis” or not. We would still choose.



## Chapter 6: ASSAULT ON THE SCREEN

The media of sameness & separation represent the one world in its most religious form — the structuring of the social in images. Mere consciousness of this process cannot overcome it — opposition must also take a religious form in a reenchantment of counter-imagery; here one might speak of a rationalism of the marvellous. The only way to evade mere reaction (and thus subsumption into the image) would seem to lie in “sacralizing” our struggle against sameness & separation; — but only failure could induce us to accept the term “Romanticism” as critique (or praise) of our proposal.

Five years ago the media of sameness & separation attained much the same freedom & autonomy as the medium of money itself. Thus they shifted their emphasis from mere surpression to realization and to the “interdisciplinary” boundary-breaking amalgamation of all modes of representation (from education to advertizing) into a single “polysemic” catastrophe of form: — the body slumped before the screen, all corporeality reduced to a darkness given shape only by light from the gnostic pleroma, that realm of transcendence from which bodies are exiled: — the heaven of glass.

The old Dualism has imploded into a totalized topology defined by the gnoseographic geosophy of money and its less-than-one dimensionality. The “mirror of production” has been superseded by a complete transparency, the vertigo of terror. Land, labor, nature, self itself, life itself, and even death can be re-invented as the basis of all exchange — everything is money.

[Note: Needless to say, these generalizations do not concern the reality, but rather the ideology of global Capital (the ideology of the “post-ideological” con) — the intoxicated pronouncements of an “information economy” — the charade of “deregulation” (how can one speak of revolution when Capital has already broken all the rules?) Of course Capital has not really transcended production, but merely resituated it — somewhere near the realm of cemetery management or waste disposal. Capital wants ecstasy, not Taylorism; it longs for purity, for disembodiment.]

Ecstatic mediation finally blocks expression at the root, as for example in the biotechnological prosthesis or indifferentiation of body & screen. Mock nuptials of Eros & Thanatos: — terminal enclosure. The “greater jihad” of course is directed against the separated self — against suffocation of the true self that must express “its lord”, its deepest meaning. But the “lesser jihad” is no less vital or imbued with baraka: — the assault on the screen.

## Chapter 7: THE MORALITY OF VIOLENCE

Any paradoxical reappearance of morality here will naturally begin on the ruins of orthodoxy — and pitch nothing more permanent there than the black tents of Ibn Khaldun’s bedouin. And yet sooner or later *jihad* (struggle) leads back (via *ta’wil* or hermeneutic exegesis) to *shariah* or law. But *shariah* also means path, or way — it is already the “open road” of the aimless wanderer. Values arise from imagination, i.e. from motion. “Where the gods have stopped” — this is the real. But the gods move on; they move, like light on water in Pindar’s Odes.

The attentat is not immoral but simply impossible. The message of “terrorism” is that there’s no there there; only the cybergnostic history-dump of sheer emptiness and anguish — limited liability as a cosmic principle. One might consider a morality (perhaps even an “imaginal morality”) of violence against ideas & institutions — but the language lacks terms for such a form and thus dooms militancy to an indistinction of focus, even a deficit of attention. In any case it’s not merely a question of one’s “spiritual state” but of an actual auto-restructuring of cognition — not a state but a “station” in Sufi terms. To borrow a phrase from Ismailism, this is our version of the Da’wa al Qadimi or the Ancient Propaganda — old because it is never quite fully born.

## Chapter 8: FIN DE SIECLE

There's nothing of futurity left to the concept of utopia. "Hope against hope"; no real choice is involved. Presence remains impure — only absence assumes the crystalline skeletal form of perfect eternity. A moral judgement if you like: intolerance for what opposes the jihad — but no more dandyism, no more brittle & elaborate constructions of the self.

Difference as identity constitutes a mode of expression as well as a mode of volition; there exists a tao of this process, a spontaneous ordering rather than an imperialist Cartesian gaze. This mode of expression as it pertains to culture (the "self-made" aspect of the social) either sets up an amplificatory resonance with "Nature" and is thus capable of changing the world-as-consensus or else it is mere criminal stupidity.

Here again "mere" consciousness scarcely matters; hence there emerges for us an emphasis on non-ordinary states that overcome the dichotomy of self-reflective auto-intellection in concentrated attentiveness and in "skill". The self-closure of aesthetic or mental isolation denies the fact that every pleasure is an expansion, that reciprocity is non-predatory expansiveness. If revolt as expression responds to sameness & separation simultaneously, it constitutes by definition a movement toward difference & presence — and as the old phrenologists said, toward "communicativeness". That is neither mere "communication" — subject to the drag of mediation & discorporealization — nor ecstatic "communion" ( a term which smacks of the exacerbated authoritarianism of an enforced presence) — but rather a convivial connectivity — an eros of the social.

## Chapter 9: THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

Proudhonian federalism based on non-hegemonic particularities in a “nomadological” or rhizomatic mutuality of synergistic solidarities — this is our revolutionary structure. (The very dryness of the terms itself suggests the need for an infusion of life into the theoryscape!) Post-Enlightenment ideology will experience queasiness at the notion of the revolutionary implications of a religion or way of life always already opposed to the monoculture of sameness & separation. Contemporary reaction will blanch at the idea of interpermeability, the porosity of solidarity, conviviality & presence as the complementarity & harmonious resonance of “revolutionary difference”.

To take Islam as an example — the hyperorthodox & the ulemocracy cannot so easily reduce it to a hegemonistic/universalistic ideology as to rule out divergent forms of “sacred politics” informed by Sufism [e.g. the Naqshbandis], radical Shiism [e.g. Ali Shariati], Ismailism, Islamic Humanism, the “Green Path” of Col. Qadafi (part neo-Sufism, part anarcho-syndicalism), or even the cosmopolitan Islam of Bosnia. [Note: we mention these elements not to condone them necessarily, but to indicate that Islam is not a monolith of “fundamentalism”.]

Traditions of tolerance, voluntaryism, egalitarianism, concern for social justice, critique of “usury”, mystical utopianism — etc. — can form the constellations of a new propaganda within Islam, unshakably opposed to the cognitive colonialism of the numisphere, oriented to “empirical freedoms” rather than ideology, critical of repression within Islam, but committed to its creativity, reticence, interiority, militance, & style. Islam’s concern with pollution of the imagination, which manifests in a literal veiling of the image, constitutes a powerful strategic realization for the jihad; — that which is veiled is not absent or invisible, since the veil is a sign of its presence, its imaginal reality, its power. That which is veiled is *unseen*.

## Chapter 10: VOLKWAYS

Tribal societies, left to their own devices, wage war in a manner not so much hegemonistic as adventuristic — and as P.Clastres pointed out, such horizontal warfare (like other “primitive” customs) actually militates against the emergence of “the State” and its verticality: — violence as a form of resistance against separation, which is always felt by the tribe as a dangerous or “evil” possibility — violence as a form of the perennial fission or break up & redistribution of power.

The jihad is not meant to be a return of this form of violence but a dialectical realization of its repressed content. This principle allows for a coalescence of variegated differences not just as a utopian construct but as a strategic bundling — as a “war machine”.

Gustav Landauer makes clear that such groupings can themselves be considered both horizontally (or “federally”) and vertically — not as categorical entifications, that is, but as *volk*, peoples, “nations” in the Native-american sense of the term. This concept was looted by base reaction and distorted into hegemonism of the worst sort, but it too can be rescued (an “adventure” in itself). [We need to re-read Proudon, Marx, Nietzsche, Landauer, Fourier, Benjamin, Bakhtin, the IWW, etc. — the way the EZLN re-reads Zapata!]

Landauer also pointed out that the State is in part an inner relation, and not an absolute. Inasmuch as power shifts from the national map to “pure” Capital, the outer State becomes increasingly irrelevant as a focus of opposition. “Neutrality” is not an option: — either a zone is part of the one world, or it enters opposition. If the opposition zone coincides with certain political entities, then the revolution may have to consider political alliances. The greater jihad — against the inner relation of power — remains always the same; but the lesser jihad, against the outer relation, constantly changes shape.

[Note: Everything hinges on the perception that two forces — autonomy & federation — are not opposed but complementary or even complicit; if this is paradox, then it is paradox that must be lived. Ethnic cleansing & violent chauvinism are to be opposed from the point of view of federalism & solidarity because the hegemonism of such reaction simply reproduces the hegemonism (the cruelty) of the one world & even augments it. And authentic (non-hegemonic) difference must be defended because (or inasmuch as) it cannot or “should not” be obliterated by the Moloch of capitalist consciousness. Autonomy without federalism is at best implausible, at worst reactionary — but federalism without autonomy simply threatens the one value that unites the jihad — self-determination or “empirical freedom”.]

For the strategic coalescence, complexity is not just an aesthetic but a necessity, a cognitive *maquis* or zone of resistance, a realm of ambiguity where the uprising must find its economy, its heartlands. Every “nation” whether self-formed or traditional, and every group which moves horizontally within or across this milieu — councils, committees, unions, festivals — indeed, every “sovereign individual” — may consider federation on the basis of an ad-hoc anti-hegemonic front against the self-proclaimed totality of sameness & separation, and for a world of difference and presence.

From a certain viewpoint the force of presence or solidarity arises from the reality of “class” — although if we adopt that term we must consider the vast realignments and kaleidoscopic shifts of meaning that have unpacked & assembled it anew, stripped it of its 19<sup>th</sup> century accoutrements, its one-world telos & monocultural aesthetic — its scientism, its disenchantments, & its fatality. It’s not just a question of the “proletarianization of the zones”, but of the seamless and “natural” suppression of autonomous consciousness (and here, consciousness does matter).

## Chapter 11: REVOLUTIONARY SOTERIOLOGY

Thus the “world to be saved” by the jihad consists not only of that Nature which cannot suffer final enclosure without the fatal estrangement of consciousness itself from all “original intimacy”, but also the space of culture, of authentic becoming: — *Tierra y Libertad*. Agriculture may be considered as a tragic Fall from natural human economy — (gathering, hunting, reciprocity) — and even as a catastrophic shift in cognition itself. But to entertain the notion of its abolition involves a crypto-malthusian or even biophobic nihilism suspiciously akin to Gnostic suicide. The morality of substruction is already a morality of rescue (and vice-versa); the kernel of the new society is always already forming within the shell of the old. Whatever the one world seeks to destroy or denigrate takes on for us the unmistakeable aura of organic life; — this applies to the whole panoply of our present “late stone age”, even its Fourierist refinements, even its surrealist urbanism (even “Civilization” might be considered a “good idea” if it could be released from its own predatory determinism), — this defines our conservatism. Thus despite everything, despite the titanic depredations of Capital’s artificial intelligence, the “world to be saved” sometimes seems to differ from “this” world only by a hair’s-breadth of satori. But it is entirely from this crack that our radical opposition emerges. The millennium is always the opening of a present moment — but it is also always the ending of a world.

## Chapter 12: THE HIDDEN IMAM

The jist of the jihad: when oppression takes the simultaneous & even paradoxical form of sameness & separation, then resistance or opposition logically proposes difference & presence — a revolutionary paradox. The rhizomatic segmentary society of identity that precipitates from this super-saturated logic of resistance can be contemplated from any angle, vertical or horizontal, diachronic or synchronic, ethnic or aesthetic — within the one necessary revolutionary anti-hegemonic principle of presence.

Our present state of flattened and irritable inattentiveness can only be compared to some esoteric medieval sin like spiritual sloth or existential forgetfulness; our first pleasure will be to imagine for ourselves a propaganda potent as the gnostic “Call”, an aesthetic of repentance-&-conversion or “self-overcoming”, a Sorelian mythos — a Millennium.

The blind panopticon of Capital remains, after all, most vulnerable in the realm of “magic” — the manipulation of images to control events, hermetic “action at a distance”. If the tong provides a possible form for the new propaganda of the deed, then it must be confessed that mere aesthetic withdrawal (disappearance as will to power) cannot provide sufficient heat to hatch the egg of its secrecy. All that was once *tertium quid* is now (or soon will be) engaged either in capitulation or in opposition, as conflagration, as uprising against the management of desire & imagination within the englobed enclosure of the one world.

But in a pre-revolutionary situation the tactical advantage of clandestinity, of the unseen (the language of the heart), already restores to aesthetics its revolutionary centrality. The art of the unseen escapes absorption into the image-based “discourse of the totality” — and thus, alone of all possible forms, still holds out the millennial promise of art, the changing of the world.

[Note: the term “art” is being used here in two different senses: — the first sense is perhaps Romantic in that it addresses the dilemma of the artist per se & the problem of the “avant garde”. But the second sense aims to dissolve the whole question of art’s seperateness in a practicum that is “normal” & that intersects (indeed almost coincides) with the realm of lived experience. The ordinary & the extraordinary are no longer opposed here, & are perhaps even in collusion, or in a dance of fused delineations. A crude truism: — the moment of the well-made is the very fabric of life itself, of life’s saturation with itself; it is in the sense that traditional cultures could see no distinction between life & art. If we were to speak of “political art”, it could only be in the sense of an investigation of the fact that for us Capital defines itself in the context of a split between these things that “cannot” be separated. But this is a problem for every “worker”, & not just for the “cultural worker” — & so in this sense, art begins to approach an area of identity with “revolutionary action”.]



## Chapter 13: CALL & RESPONSE

Less than a decade ago it was still possible to think of the “enemy” as the Planetary Work Machine, or the Spectacle — & therefore to think of resistance under the rubric of withdrawal or even escape. No great mysterious veil separated us from our will to imagine other forms of production, ludic & autonomous, or other form of representation, authentic & pleasurable. The obvious goal was to form (or sustain) alternative nuclei based on the implementation of such forms, deploying resistance as a tactic in defence of these zones (whether temporary or permanent). In aikido there’s no such thing as offense — one simply removes oneself from the force of an attack, whereupon the attacker’s force turns against itself & defeats itself. Capitalism actually lost some ground to these tactics, in part because it was susceptible to “third force” strategies, and in part because as an ideology it remained unable to deal with its own inner contradictions (“democracy” for example).

Now the situation has changed. Capitalism is freed of its own ideological armoring & need no longer concede space to any “third force”. Although the founder of aikido could dodge bullets, no one can stand aside from the onslaught of a power that occupies the whole extent of tactical space. Escapism is possible for the “third guest, the parasite”, but not for the sole opponent. Capitalism is now at liberty to declare war & deal directly as enemies with all former “alternatives” (including “democracy”). In this sense we have not chosen ourselves as opposition — we have been chosen.

In kendo it is said that there is no such thing as a defensive move, or rather that the only defense is a good offense. The attacker however has the disadvantage (imbalance) as in aikido: — so what to do? A paradox: when attacked, strike first. Clearly our “alternatives” are no longer merely interesting options, but life-or-death strategic positions. However, revolution is not a kendo match — nor a morality play. It would seem that our tactics will be defined not so much by history as by our determination to remain within history — not by “survival” but by persistence.

The “What Is To Be Done?” question must now be begged for two reasons: — first, there already exists thousands of organisations working above-ground for de facto revolutionary goals (or at least for good causes) — but no organizing myth, no propaganda, no transformative “revolutionary consciousness” capable of transcending separation as reformist institutionalization & ideological sclerosis [“franchising the issues”]. Second, most “illegalism” is frustratingly doomed to counterproductivity & recuperation for precisely the same reason — no consciousness, or rather, no metanoia, no unfragmented consciousness. In such a situation no coalescence seems feasible, and the jihad is faced first & foremost by the brutally theoretical need to comprehend & articulate its own historicity. To speak now of a “pre-revolutionary situation” smacks of the irony that such terms must inevitably invoke (history as “nightmare”) — What signs have arisen, & on what horizon?

Here it should be recalled that “propaganda of the deed” was originally intended to include “good works” as well as violent ones; the temporary autonomous zone thus retains its value not only for its own sake but as a historicization of lived experience, perhaps even a mode of propaganda-in-action. The uprising could then be seen as the proposal of a “permanent au-

onomous zone”; and the coalescence of many such groups would make up the form of the “millennium”. Here even “withdrawal” could have value as a tactic — provided it were coordinated & practised militantly on a mass scale — “revolutionary peace”.

The very expression of such a scheme reveals at once how distant we remain from any realization. While we would like to indulge a crude existentialist penchant for “action”, or at least for some sort of “anti-pessimism”, any discussion of real tactics at this point might well prove fatally (or ludicrously) premature. Besides, “What should I do?” is perhaps the most mediated of questions, the one guaranteed to make any answer impossible.

\* \* \*

Such is our density that it’s taken five years to figure this out. Everything that was once a “third path” must be re-thought in the light of one fact: — one world faces us, not two. If resistance has collapsed into bickering nostalgia (1968 has become as “tragic” for us as every other failure) — if leftist bitchiness & fascist particularism hold such an allure for exhausted radicals etc. — then it is because we have failed to articulate this one fact even to ourselves: — that by proclaiming itself absolute and by constructing a world on that proclamation, Capital has called back into being its old nemesis (so disgraced by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so dead, so dull) called it back into a whole new incarnation — as the last ditch defense of all that cannot be englobed — called back the revolution, the jihad.

New York/Dublin

Sept 1, 1996

[Note: This version, not necessarily final, was arrived at with criticism & help from several groups: The Libertarian Book Club of New York, The Autonomedia editorial collective of Brooklyn, and the Garden of Delight in Dublin; the opinions however are my own, not theirs.]

## **Part 3: For and Against Interpretation**

Angels are knocking at the tavern door

— Hafez of Shiraz

...[to] the Lunatics of Ireland...

— Dean Swift's Last Will & Testament (formerly inscribed on the £10 note)

Kildare is flat — so no matter where you go you can see the electric lines parading across the landscape like Hollywood Martians. Patrick is staying at “Bishop’s Court” which despite the name turns out to be a dank, three-room cottage and an old cowshed littered with artworks by Hilarius and others including several pieces made out of rusty farm implements and slabs of peat cut from local bog. After tea in the windswept muddy farmyard, we set out to find St. Patrick’s Church and Well, not far away in another farmyard next to a metal barn and surrounded by cows and cowshit — thirteenth century or earlier, Romanesque with a touch of Gothic (or Egyptian?) in the pointed arch of the windows — restored in the 1950s but forgotten and overgrown with ivy and cobwebs — the architecture enforces humility since one must stoop to enter as in Zen tea-houses. Our friends James and Sean have decided to spruce it up, construct an altar and hang a brass bell in the belfry, then see how long it takes for anyone to notice. We walk along the road occasionally cringing into the wildflowers, to dodge the fast cars of big farmers, then duck into the hedge of blackberry vines full of late flowers and early fruit. The Well doesn’t appear to be listed in any national Register — perhaps no one visits it anymore. Like other springs I’ve seen in Ireland, it feels like a sapphire set in an emerald set in jade, set in a druid’s hand — we circle it thrice sunwise then drink — cars are whizzing by not twenty paces away — Sean recently saw a spirit here and left a portrait of it like a life-mask in plaster next to the Well on a slab of stone.

According to the 13<sup>th</sup> century Andalusian Sufi Ibn Arabi there exist “delicate tenuities” that stretch between heaven and earth like Jacobs-ladders — and the “meanings” which descend along these tenuities are like angels. I believe he actually saw the tenuities as nearly-transparent ribbands of light, strands of aurora borealis pulsing with luminous nodes like stars falling through gauze curtains. There’s no need to limit this perception either by theological or psychological explanations — for the naïve realist any experience has as much a prior claim to ontological authenticity as any other experience — a spirit is seen or a meaning descends in the same manner that a soft rain is seen and descends. But how naïve can we be? Never mind — the most advanced science or abstruse theology leads us in bewilderment back to the same crude existentialist proposal: since it appears, it might as well be real. So — if the meaning that appears in the tenuity is real, it can be traced back to its source which is real — or real enough for our present purposes — and this tracing-back is called (by the Ismaili gnostics) *ta’wil*, or “Interpretation.” The psychologist would say the knowledge that arises in this operation comes from inside — the theologian would say it comes from outside — but for us both explanations have lost power to beguile. As an alchemical process, interpretation transpires in a space both inside/outside and neither simultaneously; as “hermeneutic exegesis” (in Henry Corbin’s phrase) it belongs to an in-between or isthmus called *Mundus Imaginalis*, where images appear as autonomous, or where dreams foretell the truth. In one sense neither real nor unreal, in another sense, perfectly capable of appearing to us as spirit, the world of imagination acts as if it were the source of significances, location of personae, breath of the world. Science and religion might unite to call this delusion — but for us it is rather a matter of sheer desperation. The two-dimensionality of duelling epis-

temologies, dichotomies, semantic traps, bad faiths — fuck science and religion — we should demand a rationalism of the marvellous — an end to the violence of the explanation.

In this context, individuals and groups bear the responsibility of making contact with their own angels — even the mystic gurus has misled us here, since they stand between us and our own awareness and pretend to an authority that reduces us to subjects — or rather to objects — objects of someone else’s interpretation. It seems we cannot escape the imputation of an old heresy here — based on the presumption that everyone at every moment knows precisely what’s going on and what to do — if only they can break free of need, oppression, and the suffocation of false consciousness — and escape the scarcity by which authority measures its wealth and its power against us. Above all — the scarcity of interpretation.

The most pernicious power of interpretation belongs now to Capital itself, which claims to be free of all dualities, all otherness — in a terminal “obscene ecstasy” of united and flattened consciousness — a universalization of money in conceptual space, far removed and transcended above all mere filthy production, a kind of numisphere or heavenly weather of pure money — and in global debt, everything’s debt to nothing, like a black hole on the event horizon, sucking up every last particle of light in an emptiness beyond history. According to the “natural law” of this total liberation of money, nothing — not even air, water, or dirt — is to be experienced directly by the autonomous self or group; everything must be mediated by money itself, which intends to stand between consciousness and production as an absolute filter, sifting out every last trace of authenticity and charging for it — taxing reality itself — as an ultimate power beyond even authority or law. Above all, Capital intends to acquire a monopoly on interpretation.

Walter Benjamin has elucidated the process whereby the commodity is imbued with a “utopian trace” — that is, by the image of a promise: that this object-for-sale contains a kind of futurity or no-place-place where your consciousness will once more be valid, your experience real. If the product were not so advertized, you would not buy it — but if the product delivered its promise, you would stop buying other products — why go on spending money once realization is attained? — and thus cause the collapse of Capitalism. Money can only circulate freely in a realm of continual disappointment — the reproduction of scarcity is the production of wealth. I am only rich if others are poor — but money itself has no other end or goal than the total poverty of everything that is not “the Market.” Having long ago capitalized all material being, the power of scarcity has had no choice but to commodify the image (and the imagination) as well — on the presumption that this is an ever-expanding market. Awareness must be privatized — thought must be appropriated, adulterated, alienated, packaged, labelled, advertized and sold back to consciousness. All creativity must be priced, and even the very process of resistance against this expropriation must be turned to profit (“Be a rebel — buy a Toyota!” — or “Image is nothing, taste is everything” as a slogan for some crappy softdrink). All informational media from education to advertizing are dedicated to detaching the image from any mooring in experienced life, floating it free, and rematerializing it in commodification. Work, consume, die.

Tourism is perfect Capitalism: the consumption of the image of the world as it really is — the chief goods on sale include geography (the inscription of significance in the landscape) and historiography (the inscription of meaning in the culturescape). But the ultimate image is that of the “blessing” or baraka inherent in the object of the tourist’s gaze. The possible moment of realization is packaged, pre-interpreted by official experts, transformed into a series of views, distanced from the direct senses (touch, taste, smell); space is overwhelmed by time, stratified, separated, parcelled on a grid of permissible expectation; becoming is rendered into the rigid

digitalizations of recording devices, banished from memory, and embalmed into a counterfeit of pure being. So-called primitives would say that soul is being stolen here, that meaning itself has entered a field of decay, a sort of beam emanating from an evil eye or withered self eaten by envy of all significance. The problem lies not in the content of the tourist's experience — one can imagine tours based on ideas we might consider quite correct or even beautiful — the problem is inherent in the container, in the very fact of interpretation, in the structure of a "dialogue" that excludes all response, resonance, or resistance. Certain kinds of travel — nomadism, pilgrimage — return meaning to the landscape. Other kinds — war, tourism — can only take it away. Reciprocity reaches a vanishing point in such patterns of depredation. Even the most subtle propaganda of the State never approached this ultimate edge — after all, it always evoked its own opposition — while tourism represents the end of all dialectic — since the only negative gesture it evokes is terrorism, which is its own suppressed content, it's "evil twin". The tourist, seduced by the utopian trace in its most poignant aspect — the image of difference — becomes a molecule of pollution, bears the virus of sameness, and the burden of disappointment, into a world that once lived for itself.

The role of the artist in Capitalism can be compared with that of the tour-guide: — interpreter of experience for consumption on the most elite level, agent of recuperation for society's most exquisite longing or deepest resentments; — and even a tour-guide may be sincere. But the comparison might prove invidious — inasmuch as the artist's intention is to add meaning to the sum total of experience, not to subtract or abstract it. The gesture art makes presupposes the gesture of reciprocity, of presence. This movement is interrupted by the essentially non-human intervention of Capital, the exacerbated mediation of a power that can only grow by creating scarcity and separation. What if all the artists, poets, scholars and musicians of Ireland were invited to transform the country's new Interpretive Centres in their own image? Who cares what exalted aesthetic lays claim to the triumph of interpretation so long as the result is always the suppression of our own creativity? In Java, I heard that "Everyone must be an artist" — and indeed everyone already is an artist to the extent that all lived experience is a co-creation of self and other: — production that is also play — and above all, the production of meaning. We do not need the artist to live for us, but simply to be our facilitator, our companion, part of our circle of reciprocity — and as for art, if there exists any way for it to avoid being englobed, we can see it only as a form of opposition to the One Big World of unified representation. Such art refuses to become part of the Grand Unified Theory of the end of physics or history or the minimum wage or anything else. There's nothing "virtual" about it — and it's not headed for a condition of "disappearance," which would simply amount to defeat. I believe modern art as resistance is headed for the condition of the Unseen. That which is real but not seen has the power of the occult, of the imagination, of the erotic — like Sean's spirit-mask at Patrick's Well, it gives back meaning to the landscape — it abides unnoticed until someone perhaps takes it as a free gift — by its very existence it challenges the world of the commodified image and changes (however slightly) the shape of consensus reality. Even at its most hidden and secret, it exercises a magnetic effect, brings about subtle shifts and re-alignments — and at least in theory, it gives up merely talking about the world in order to change it. Is this perhaps however covertly an authoritarian act? No, not if it were a sharing of meaning, an opening into the field of "delicate tenuousities". What if it were rendered completely invisible? Then perhaps we might speak of the presence of spirits, of a necessary re-enchantment too tenuous for the imperial heaviness of the eye — and of a necessary clandestinity. And what if

it were to re-appear sometime as sheer opposition to the unbreathing virtuality of a world which is always deferred, always someplace else, always fatal?

That evening we drive back to Dublin in the long summer light past megalithic mounds, travellers' encampments, and the crumbling 18<sup>th</sup> century follies and ziggurats of mad Ascendency lords — past St. Patrick's Hospital, which Dean Swift left in his will "to the lunatics of Ireland" — sites that have perhaps not yet been absorbed into the new world of Euro-money, golf, and the National Heritage. Just before nightfall, we're in Dun Laoghaire near the Martello tower, looking out at a heavy and nostalgic view of the ocean under gray clouds. The front gardens of the seedy Victorian seaside villas are adorned with one of my favorite Irish plants, mysterious and rather shabby palmtrees that evoke for me a secret Moorish past, a memory of Barbary corsairs, or of monks from Egypt and Spain. A Celtic cross was once discovered in Ireland engraved with the Arabic phrase "Bismillah," the opening of the Koran. These palmtrees were probably introduced by some turn-of-the-century horticulturalist with a taste for the exotic, but for me they stand for Ireland's "hidden African soul." A soft dark rain begins to fall. Or that at least is my interpretation.

Dublin, Aug. 23, 1996

## **Part 4: Religion and Revolution**



Real money & hierarchic religion appear to have arisen in the same mysterious moment sometime between the early Neolithic and the third millennium BC in Sumer or Egypt; which came first, the chicken or the egg? Was one a response to the other or is one an aspect of the other?

No doubt that money possesses a deeply religious implication since from the very moment of its appearance it begins to strive for the condition of the spirit — to remove itself from the world of bodies, to transcend materiality, to become the one true efficacious symbol. With the invention of writing around 3100 BC money as we know it emerges from a complicated system of clay tokens or counters representing material goods & takes the form of written bills of credit impressed on clay tablets; almost without exception these “cheques” seem to concern debts owed to the State Temple, & in theory could have been used in an extended system of exchange as credit-notes “minted” by the theocracy. Coins did not appear until around 700 BC in Greek Asia Minor; they were made of electrum (gold and silver) not because these metals had commodity value but because they were sacred — Sun & Moon; the ratio of value between them has always hovered around 14:1 not because the earth contains 14 times as much silver as gold but because the Moon takes 14 “suns” to grow from dark to full. Coins may have originated as temple tokens symbolizing a worshipper’s due share of the sacrifice — holy souvenirs, which could later be traded for goods because they had “mana”, not use-value. (This function may have originated in the Stone Age trade in “ceremonial” stone axe-heads used in potlatch-like distribution rites.) Unlike Mesopotamian credit-notes, coins were inscribed with sacred images & were seen as liminal objects, nodal points between quotidian reality & the world of the spirits (this accounts for the custom of bending coins to “spiritualize” them and throwing them into wells, which are the “eyes” of the otherworld.) Debt itself — the true content of all money — is a highly “spiritual” concept. As tribute (primitive debt) it exemplifies capitulation to a “legitimate power” of expropriation masked in religious ideology — but as “real debt” it attains the uniquely spiritual ability to reproduce itself as if it were an organic being. Even now it remains the only “dead” substance in all the world to possess this power — “money begets money”. At this point money begins to take on a parodic aspect vis-à-vis religion — it seems that money wants to rival god, to become immanent spirit in the form of pure metaphysicality which nevertheless “rules the world”. Religion must take note of this blasphemous nature in money and condemn it as *contra naturam*. Money & religion enter opposition — one cannot serve God & Mammon simultaneously. But so long as religion continues to perform as the ideology of separation (the hierarchic State, expropriation, etc.) it can never really come to grips with the money-problem. Over & over again reformers arise within religion to chase the moneylenders from the temple, & always they return — in fact often enough the moneylenders become the Temple. (It’s certainly no accident that banks for along time aped the forms of religious architecture.) According to Weber it was Calvin who finally resolved the issue with his theological justification for “usury” — but this scarcely does credit to the real Protestants, like the Ranters & Diggers, who proposed that religion should once & for all enter into total opposition to money — thereby launching the Millennium. It seems more likely that the Enlightenment should take credit for resolving the problem — by jettisoning religion as the ideology of the ruling class & replacing it with rationalism (& “Classical Economics”). This formula however would fail to do justice to those real illuminati who proposed the dismantling of all ideologies of power & authority — nor would it help to explain why “official” religion failed to realize its potential as opposition at this point, & instead went on providing moral support for both State & Capital.

Under the influence of Romanticism however there arose — both inside & outside of “official” religion — a growing sense of spirituality as an alternative to the oppressive aspects of Liberalism & its intellectual/artistic allies. On the one hand this sense led to a conservative-revolutionary form of romantic reaction (e.g. Novalis) — but on the other hand it also fed into the old heretical tradition (which also began with the “rise of Civilization” as a movement of resistance to the theocracy of expropriation) — and found itself in a strange new alliance with rationalist radicalism (the nascent “left”); William Blake, for example, or the “Blaspheming Chapels” of Spence & his followers, represent this trend. The meeting of spirituality & resistance is not some surrealist event or anomaly to be smoothed out or rationalized by “History” — it occupies a position at the very root of radicalism; — and despite the militant atheism of Marx or Bakunin (itself a kind of mutated mysticism or “heresy”), the spiritual still remains inextricably involved with the “Good Old Cause” it helped create.

Some years ago Régis Debray wrote an article pointing out that despite the confident predictions of 19<sup>th</sup> century materialism, religion had still perversely failed to go away — and that perhaps it was time for the Revolution to come to terms with this mysterious persistence. Coming from a Catholic culture Debray was interested in “Liberation Theology”, itself a projection of the old quasi-heresy of the “Poor” Franciscans & the recurrent rediscovery of “Bible communism”. Had he considered Protestant culture he might have remembered the 17<sup>th</sup> century, & looked for its true inheritance; if Moslem he could have evoked the radicalism of the Shiites or Ismailis, or the anti-colonialism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “neo-Sufis”. Every religion has called forth its own inner antithesis over & over again; every religion has considered the implications of moral opposition to power; every tradition contains a vocabulary of resistance as well as capitulation to oppression. Speaking broadly one might say that up until now this “counter-tradition” — which is both inside & outside religion — has comprised a “suppressed content”. Debray’s question concerned its potential for realization. Liberation Theology lost most of its support within the church when it could no longer serve its function as rival (or accomplice) of Soviet Communism; & it could no longer serve this function because Communism collapsed. But some Liberation theologians proved to be sincere — and still they persist (as in Mexico); moreover, an entire submerged & related tendency within Catholicism, exemplified in the almost Scholastic anarchism of an Ivan Illich, lingers in the background. Similar tendencies could be identified within Orthodoxy (e.g. Bakunin), Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, and (in a somewhat different sense) Buddhism; moreover, most “surviving” indigenous forms of spirituality (e.g. Shamanism) or the Afro-american syncretisms can find common cause with various radical trends in the “major” religions on such issues as the environment, & the morality of anti-Capitalism. Despite elements of romantic reaction, various New Age & post-New-Age movements can also be associated with this rough category.

In a previous essay we have outlined reasons for believing that the collapse of Communism implies the triumph of its single opponent, Capitalism; that according to neo-liberal global propaganda only one world now exists; & that this political situation has grave implications for a theory of money as the virtual deity (autonomous, spiritualized, & all-powerful) of the single universe of meaning. Under these conditions everything that was once a third possibility (neutrality, withdrawal, counter-culture, the “Third World”, etc.) now must find itself in a new situation. There is no longer any “second” — how can there be a “third”? The “alternatives” have narrowed catastrophically. The One World is now in a position to crush everything which once escaped its ecstatic embrace — thanks to the unfortunate distraction of waging an essentially economic

war against the Evil Empire. There is no more third way, no more neither/nor. Everything that is different will now be subsumed into the sameness of the One World — or else will discover itself in opposition to that world. Taking this thesis as given, we must now ask where religion will locate itself on this new map of “zones” of capitulation & resistance. If “revolution” has been freed of the incubus of Soviet oppression and is now once again a valid concept, are we finally in a position to offer a tentative answer to Debray’s question?

Taking “religion” as a whole, including even those forms such as shamanism that belong to Society rather than the State (in terms of Clastres’s anthropology); including polytheisms, monotheisms, & non-theisms; including mysticisms & heresies as well as orthodoxies, “reformed” churches, & “new religions” — obviously the subject under consideration lacks definition, borders, coherence; & it cannot be questioned because it would only generate a babel of responses rather than an answer. But “religion” does refer to something — call it a certain range of colors in the spectrum of human becoming — & as such it might be considered (at least pro tem) as a valid dialogic entity & as a theorizable subject. In the triumphant movement of Capital — in its processual moment so to speak — all religion can only be viewed as nullity, i.e. as a commodity to be packaged & sold, an asset to be stripped, or an opposition to be eliminated. Any idea (or ideology) that cannot be subsumed into capital’s “End of History” must be doomed. This includes both reaction & resistance — & it most certainly includes the non-separative “re-linking” (religio) of consciousness with “spirit” as unmediated imaginal self-determination & value-creation — the original goal of all ritual & worship. Religion in other words has lost all connection with worldly power because that power has migrated off-world — it has abandoned even the State & achieved the purity of apotheosis, like the God that “abandoned Anthony” in Cavafy’s poem. The few States (mostly Islamic) wherein religion holds power are located precisely within the ever-shrinking region of national opposition to Capital — (thus providing them with such potential strange bedfellows as Cuba!). Like all other “third possibilities” religion is faced with a new dichotomy: total capitulation, or else revolt. Thus the “revolutionary potential” of religion clearly appears — although it remains unclear whether resistance might take the form of reaction or radicalism — or indeed whether religion is not already defeated — whether its refusal to go away is that of an enemy, or a ghost.

In Russia & Serbia the Orthodox Church appears to have thrown in its lot with reaction against the New World Order & thus found new fellowship with its old Bolshevik oppressors, In Chechnya the Naqshbandi Sufi Order continues its centuries-old struggle against Russian imperialism. In Chiapas there’s a strange alliance of Mayan “pagans” & radical Catholics. Certain factions of American Protestantism have been driven to the point of paranoia & armed resistance (but even paranoids have some real enemies); while Native-american spirituality undergoes a small but miraculous revival — not a Ghost Shirt uprising this time, but a reasoned & profound stand against the hegemony of Capital’s monoculture. The Dalai Lama sometimes appears as the one “world leader” capable of speaking truth both to the remnants of the Communist oppression & the forces of Capitalist inhumanity; a “Free Tibet” might provide some kind of focus for an “inter-faith” bloc of small nations & religious groups allied against the transcendental social darwinism of the consensus. Arctic shamanism may re-emerge as an “ideology” for the self-determination of certain new Siberian republics — and some New Religions (such as Western neo-paganism or the psychedelic cults) also belong by definition or default to the pole of opposition.

Islam has seen itself as the enemy of imperial Christianity & European imperialism almost from the moment of its inception. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century it functioned as a “third way” against

both Communism & Capitalism, & in the context of the new One World it now constitutes by definition one of the very few existing mass movements which cannot be englobed into the unity of any would-be Consensus. Unfortunately the spearhead of resistance — “fundamentalism” — tends to reduce the complexity of Islam into an artificially coherent ideology — “Islamism” — which clearly fails to speak to the normal human desire for difference & complexity. Fundamentalism has already failed to concern itself with “empirical freedoms” which must constitute the minimal demands of the new resistance; for example, its critique of “usury” is obviously an inadequate response to the machinations of the IMF & World Bank. The “gates of Interpretation” of the Shariah must be re-opened — not slammed shut forever — and a fully-realized alternative to Capitalism must emerge from within the tradition. Whatever one may think of the Libyan Revolution of 1969 it has at least the virtue of an attempt to fuse the anarcho-syndicalism of ’68 with the neo-Sufi egalitarianism of the North African Orders, & to create a revolutionary Islam — something similar could be said of Ali Shariati’s “Shiite socialism” in Iran, which was crushed by the ulemocracy before it could crystallize into a coherent movement. The point is that Islam cannot be dismissed as the puritan monolith portrayed in the Capitalist media. If a genuine anti-Capitalist coalition is to appear in the world it cannot happen without Islam. The goal of all theory capable of any sympathy with Islam, I believe, is now to encourage its radical & egalitarian traditions & to substruct its reactionary & authoritarian modes of discourse. Within Islam there persist such mythic figures as the “Green Prophet” and hidden guide of the mystics, al-Khezr, who could easily become a kind of patron saint of Islamic environmentalism; while history offers such models as the great Algerian Sufi freedom-fighter Emir Abdul Qadir, whose last act (in exile in Damascus) was to protect Syrian Christians against the bigotry of the ulema. From outside Islam there exists the potential for “interfaith” movements concerned with ideals of peace, toleration, & resistance to the violence of post-secular post-rationalist “neo-liberalism” & its allies. In effect, then, the “revolutionary potential” of Islam is not yet realized — but it is real.

Since Christianity is the religion that “gave birth” (in Weberian terms) to Capitalism, its position in relation to the present apotheosis of Capitalism is necessarily more problematic than Islam’s. For centuries Christianity has been drawing in on itself & constructing a kind of make-believe world of its own, wherein some semblance of the social might persist (if only on Sundays) — even while it maintained the cozy illusion of some relation to power. As an ally of Capital (with its seeming benign indifference to the hypothesis of faith) against “Godless Communism”, Christianity could preserve the illusion of power — at least until five years ago. Now Capitalism no longer needs Christianity & the social support it enjoyed will soon evaporate. Already the Queen of England has had to consider stepping down as the head of the Anglican Church — & she is unlikely to be replaced by the CEO of some vast international zaibatsu! Money is god — God is really dead at last; Capitalism has realized a hideous parody of the Enlightenment ideal. But Jesus is a dying-&-resurrecting god — one might say he’s been through all this before. Even Nietzsche signed his last “insane” letter as “Dionysus & the Crucified One”; in the end it is perhaps only religion that can “overcome” religion. Within Christianity a myriad tendencies appear (or have persisted since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, like the Quakers) seeking to revive that radical messiah who cleansed the Temple & promised the Kingdom to the poor. In America for instance it would seem impossible to imagine a really successful mass movement against Capitalism (some form of “progressive populism”) without the participation of the churches. Again the theoretical task begins to clarify itself; one need not propose some vulgar kind of “entryism” into organized

Christianity to radicalize it by conspiracy from within. Rather the goal would be to encourage the sincere & widespread potential for Christian radicalism either from within as an honest believer (however “existentialist” the faith!) or as an honest sympathizer from the outside.

To test this theorizing take an example — say Ireland (where I happen to be writing this). Given that Ireland’s “Problems” arise largely from sectarianism, clearly one must take an anti-clerical stance; in fact atheism would be at least emotionally appropriate. But the inherent ambiguity of religion in Irish history should be remembered: — there were moments when Catholic priests & laity supported resistance or revolution, & there were moments when Protestant ministers & laity supported resistance or revolution. The hierarchies of the churches have generally proven themselves reactionary — but hierarchy is not the same thing as religion. On the Protestant side we have Wolfe Tone & the United Irishmen — a revolutionary “interfaith” movement. Even today in Northern Ireland such possibilities are not dead; anti-sectarianism is not just a socialist ideal but also a Christian ideal. On the Catholic side... a few years ago I met a radical priest at a pagan festival in the Aran Islands, a friend of Ivan Illich. When I asked him, “What exactly is your relation to Rome?” he answered, “Rome? Rome is the enemy.” Rome has lost its stranglehold on Ireland in the last few years, brought down by anti-puritan revolt & internal scandal. It would be incorrect to say that the Church’s power has shifted to the State, unless we also add that the government’s power has shifted to Europe, & Europe’s power has shifted to international capital. The meaning of Catholicism in Ireland is up for grabs. Over the next few years we might expect to see both inside & outside the Church a kind of revival of “Celtic Christianity” — devoted to resistance against pollution of the environment both physical & imaginal, & therefore committed to anti-Capitalist struggle. Whether this trend would lead to an open break with Rome and the formation of an independent church — who knows? Certainly the trend will include or at least influence Protestantism as well. Such a broad-based movement might easily find its natural political expression in socialism or even in anarcho-socialism, & would serve a particularly useful function as a force against sectarianism & the rule of the clerisy. Thus even in Ireland it would seem that religion may have a revolutionary future.

I expect these ideas will meet with very little acceptance within traditionally atheist anarchism or the remnants of “dialectical materialism”. Enlightenment radicalism has long refused to recognize any but remote historical roots within religious radicalism. As a result, the Revolution threw out the baby (“non-ordinary consciousness”) along with the bathwater of the Inquisition or of puritan repression. Despite Sorel’s insistence that the Revolution needed a “myth”, it preferred to bank everything on “pure reason” instead. But spiritual anarchism & communism (like religion itself) have failed to go away. Indeed, by becoming an anti-Religion, radicalism had recourse to a kind of mysticism of its own, complete with ritual, symbolism, & morality. Bakunin’s remark about God — that if he existed we would have to kill him — would after all pass for the purest orthodoxy within Zen Buddhism! The psychedelic movement, which offered a kind of “scientific” (or at least experiential) verification of non-ordinary consciousness, led to a degree of rapprochement between spirituality & radical politics — & the trajectory of this movement may have only begun. If religion has “always” acted to enslave the mind or to reproduce the ideology of the ruling class, it has also “always” involved some form of entheogenesis (“birth of the god within”) or liberation of consciousness; some form of utopian proposal or promise of “heaven on earth”; and some form of militant & positive action for “social justice” as God’s plan for the creation. Shamanism is a form of “religion” that (as Clastres showed) actually institutionalizes spirituality

against the emergence of hierarchy & separation — & all religions possess at least a shamanic trace.

Every religion can point to a radical tradition of some sort. Taoism once produced the Yellow Turbans — or for that matter the Tongs that collaborated with anarchism in the 1911 revolution. Judaism produced the “anarcho-zionism” of Martin Buber & Gersholm Scholem (deeply influenced by Gustav Landauer & other anarchists of 1919), which found its most eloquent & paradoxical voice in Walter Benjamin. Hinduism gave birth to the ultra-radical Bengali Terrorist Party — & also to M. Gandhi, the modern world’s only successful theorist of non-violent revolution. Obviously anarchism & communism will never come to terms with religion on questions of authority & property; & perhaps one might say that “after the Revolution” such questions will remain to be resolved. But it seems clear that without religion there will be no radical revolution; the Old Left & the (old) New Left can scarcely fight it alone. The alternative to an alliance now is to watch while Reaction co-opts the force of religion & launches a revolution without us. Like it or not, some sort of pre-emptive strategy is required. Resistance demands a vocabulary in which our common cause can be discussed; hence these sketchy proposals.

Even assuming we could classify all the above under the rubric of admirable sentiments, we would still find ourselves far from any obvious program of action. Religion is not going to “save” us in this sense (perhaps the reverse is true!) — in any case religion is faced with the same perplexity as any other former “third position”, including all forms of radical non-authoritarianism & anti-Capitalism. The new totality & its media appear so pervasive as to fore-doom all programs of revolutionary content, since every “message” is equally subject to subsumption in the “medium” that is Capital itself. Of course the situation is hopeless — but only stupidity would take this as reason for despair, or for the terminal boredom of defeat. Hope against hope — Bloch’s revolutionary hope — belongs to a “utopia” that is never wholly absent even when it is least present; & it belongs as well to a religious sphere in which hopelessness is the final sin against the holy spirit: — the betrayal of the divine within — the failure to become human. “Karmic duty” in the sense of the Bhagavad Gita — or in the sense of “revolutionary duty” — is not something imposed by Nature, like gravity, or death. It is a free gift of the spirit — one can accept or refuse it — & both positions are perilous. To refuse is to run the risk of dying without having lived. To accept is an even more dangerous but far more interesting possibility. A version of Pascal’s Wager — not on the immortality of the soul this time, but simply on its sheer existence.

To use religious metaphor (which we’ve tried so far to avoid) the millennium began five years before the end of the century, when One World came into being & banished all duality. From the Judao-Christiano-Islamic perspective however this is the false millennium of the “Anti-Christ”; which turns out not to be a “person” (except in the world of Archetypes perhaps) but an impersonal entity, a force contra naturam — entropy disguised as life. In this view the reign of iniquity must & will be challenged in the true millennium, the advent of the messiah. But the messiah is also not a single person in the world — rather, it is a collectivity in which each individuality is realized & thus (again metaphorically or imaginally) immortalized. The “people-as-messiah” do not enter into the homogenous sameness nor the infernal separation of entropic Capitalism, but into the difference & presence of revolution — the struggle, the “holy war”. On this basis alone can we begin to work on a theory of reconciliation between the positive forces of religion & the cause of resistance. What we are offered here is simply the beginning of the beginning.

Dublin, Sept. 1, 1996

## **Part 5: Note on Nationalism**

Viewed as the quintessentialization of hierarchy & separation, the State can replicate itself on any level of experience — from the individual psyche to the laws of nations. And yet society can exist in theory without the State — & did so in fact for nearly a million years, 99% of the time span of the human species, thanks to the persistence of customs & institutions — and mythemes — that appear to have been designed for just this purpose, i.e. the suppression of the State & realization of the Social. War itself can be one of these institutions of “Society against the State”, since (in its “primitive” form) it acts to disperse power & wealth rather than concentrate it. On another level we might say that shamanism also tends toward centrifugality of power in its emphasis on direct experience rather than mere symbolization (i.e. the shaman must “really” heal the patient, the medium must “really” be possessed, otherwise their prestige evaporates: — in some tribes shamanic failure was punishable by exile or death). The proto-State then must emerge in the moment of breakdown of centrifugal force in war & religion. Changes in economic structure appear to follow upon this breakdown rather than cause it. [Note: The “breakdown” itself may have had economic causes but we cannot perceive them — certainly overpopulation and climatic change are inadequate “explanations”!] For instance, the replacement of hunting/gathering by agriculture failed to produce the proto-State. We cannot even blame the State on specialization of labor, since we are perfectly capable of imagining (with Fourier) a State-less Society based on fairly complex economics. The State seems almost *sui generis* — its birth is shrouded in a certain mystery. Something went wrong somewhere — the old myths (based on reciprocity & redistribution) collapsed before the power of a new “story” based on separation & accumulation. The precise instant is lost, although the true State lurches into archaeological view sometime around the 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium in Sumer & Egypt. In both cases the realms of war & religion seem to have coalesced to produce figurative & literal pyramid-structures impossible to conceive without tribute & slavery. The centrifugality of the social is gradually supplanted by the centripetality of power & wealth till a crisis point is reached in the catastrophic emergence of a “priest-king” & a nascent bureaucracy — the infallible signs of the true State.

The essence of the State is found in symbolization as mediation, & in mediation as alienation. These abstractions denote a brutal reality: — The appearance of History’s Bootheel. Separation & expropriation must be accomplished simultaneously on both the symbolic & actual plane. Symbols must be made to do the “work” of accumulation — the State cannot expend its energy in re-creating itself in every moment. Writing for instance technologizes symbolization to the point where power can “act at a distance” — hence the “magic” of writing, its Hermetic origin — but writing itself may have been invented in order to implement an even more basic form of symbolization — i.e. money.

Let’s examine the hypothesis that the State is impossible without money as symbolic exchange. Even the most primitive king (as opposed to “elder” or “chieftain”) can only be defined by the creation of scarcity & the accumulation of wealth — & this double process can only be reproduced in symbolization. Generally this means that the king is somehow “sacred” & thus in himself (or herself) symbolizes the very motion of energy in or between surplus & scarcity. But this motion must be impeded if the energy-transfer can only take crude material form (actual cows or jars of wheat etc.). The essential exchange of protection-for-wealth that defines the true State must be symbolized in order to transcend what might be called the inherent egalitarianism of the material, its recalcitrance, its natural resistance to accumulation. “Protection” moreover has no overt material base, whereas wealth does — hence the State will be at a disadvantage in the exchange unless it can present its power in symbolic (non-material) form — as nothing for something.



If however the State remains impossible without money (even in its most unexpected or exotic or primitive form), money seems to be quite possible without the State. Our best evidence for this comes not only from the Past but also — so to speak — from the Future.

In the past we can discern money in the symbolic exchange & social construction of the sacrifice. When the tribe grows beyond the point where it can re-create itself in the sharing of a sacrificial animal, for instance, we might surmise that one's "due share" could be symbolized by some token. Once the "spiritual content" of these tokens is transferred to an economic sphere outside the sacrifice (as for example in the Lydian temple-coins of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC) the existence of the tokens would then facilitate the "creation of scarcity" by symbolizing the accumulation of wealth. Thus money would precede the State. If we wish to push the origin of money even farther back into the past, we could examine the mysterious clay tokens that appeared in the Neolithic "Near East" around the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, apparently as counters for commodities. Real goods that are present only in symbolic form already express the possibility of scarcity — & in fact these clay counters almost certainly stand for debt. When the symbolic counters themselves are then symbolized by writing — a concept that appears at a very precise moment datable to about 3100 BC in the city of Uruk — we can speak not only of money but of banking: the centralization of debt at the religio-political focus of power, the Temple. Thus, to put it crudely, money exists for 4000 years before it mutates into a form that makes possible the emergence of the true State.

If we look to the future — i.e. to the "logic" of the present — we can see even more clearly that money exists beyond the State. In a situation where money is "free" to move across borders in defiance of all political economy, as in "neo-liberal" free-market internationalism, the State can find itself abandoned by money, & re-defined as a zone of scarcity rather than wealth. The State remains by definition mired in production, while money attains the transcendence of pure symbolization. In the last five years money has achieved almost absolute lift-off, since more than 90% of all money now refers to nothing in the sphere of production, not even to the dirty outmoded symbolic tokens called "cash" — although the entire productive world remains utterly in the power of money, such that scarcely a tomato can be grown & eaten without the mediation of symbolic exchange.

Paracelsus once told a petty German king, "Your Majesty is the true alchemist, not me (a mere puffer)! Your Majesty has only to empower a bank with a monopoly to coin money, and then borrow it. Thus you will create something out of nothing, a far more puissant act than making lead into gold!" The joke here is that the king was not the real alchemist. The locus of the magical act lay in the bank not the court. When all thrones in the world were hopelessly in debt to their own self-created central banks, the focus of power shifted. When governments resign their ancient role of protection, money breaks free at last — governments can now provide only nothing for nothing — their power is shattered. Their power has migrated into the alchemical sphere of pure symbolization.

Thus money & the State have never — at any point — been exactly identical, or even necessarily in alliance. Like the paradoxical relation of money & religion, money & the State are sometimes in conspiracy, sometimes in competition, occasionally even at war. God & Moloch, Mammon & Moloch — the intricacies of their cosmic dance might be revealed in the legend of the Templars — or the IMF! Money & the State (& religion) do not possess the simple paradoxicality of the ancient riddle about chicken & egg, but a far more complex relation; the question about cause & effect is the wrong question.

Money, the State, & religion: — all are powers of oppression, but not the same power of oppression. In fact, when deployed against each other, they can act as powers of liberation. Money “buys freedom” for example; the populist State can suppress the banks, thus freeing its citizens from “money-power”; and religion has been known to deploy its “higher morality” against both economic & political injustice.

Moreover, the State does not appear all at once in its “absolute” form. If “primitive” societies possess institutions which successfully prevent the emergence of the State, nevertheless the emergence of the State cannot erase these institutions all at once. The “early” State must still co-exist with “customs & rights” that enable Society to resist its power. In ancient Ireland for example the kingship had to depend on (and often contend with) semi-independent warrior bands, the *fianna*, whose lives were devoted to sources of power (raiding) and wealth (hunting) that remained essentially outside the control of the State. The anthropology of “Society against the State” can be extended to a sociology of historical State systems \*such as “feudalism”) where some potent institutions & mythemes work against the total accumulation of power — usually at the cost of violence. Moreover, as Karl Polanyi noted, money is also held in check in “pre-modern” cultures, not just in “primitive” societies (where money simply fails to appear), but also in quite complex State systems. “Classical civilizations” such as Mesopotamia, Greece, Mesoamerica, Egypt & even Rome retained structures of redistribution of wealth to some extent — if only as *panem et circenses*; no one could have conceived of a “free” market in such circumstance, since its obvious inhumanity would have violated every surviving principle of reciprocity — not to mention religious law. It was left to our glorious modern era to conceive of the State as absolute power, & money as “free” of all social restraint. The result might be called the Capital State: the power of money wedded to the power of war. Ultimately, once the struggle against Communism was won, it would be logical to expect a last & final struggle between Capital & the State for power pure & supreme. Instead the Molochian State appears to know that it was already secretly beaten long ago (all thrones hopelessly in debt...) & has capitulated without a whimper to the triumph of Mammon. With a few exceptions the nations are now falling all over themselves in their eagerness to “privatize” everything from health to prisons to air & water to consciousness itself. “Protection” — the only real excuse for the State’s existence — evaporates in every sphere of government’s influence, from tariffs to “human rights”. The State seems somehow to believe it can renounce not only its vestigial power over money but even its basic functions, & yet survive as an elected occupying army! Even the US, which boasts of itself as the last & final “superpower”, found itself in the very moment of its apocalyptic victory reduced to a mercenary force at the bidding of international Capital — blustering bush-league bully boasting of its crusade to overthrow a “Hitler” of the Middle East, but capable only of serving the interests of oil cartels & banks. National borders must survive so that political hirelings can divert taxes to “corporate welfare”; & so that huge profits can be made on arbitrage & currency exchange; & so that labor can be disciplined by “migratory” capital. Otherwise the State retains no real function — everything else is empty ceremony, & the sheer terrorism of the “war on crime” (i.e. the State’s post-Spectacular war on its own poor and different). Thatcher & Reagan foretold with true prescience what government should & would do once it had fulfilled its last historical goal — the overthrow of the Evil Empire. Government would voluntarily dismantle itself (at the “people’s” bidding of course) & gracefully submit to the real Hegelian absolute: — money.

Of course to speak of the “end of History” when there has been no ending (for example) of writing — nor for that matter of material production — is merely a form of insanity — perhaps

even a terminal form! Like religion, the State has simply failed to “go away” — in fact, in a bizarre extension of the thesis of “Society against the State”, we can even re-imagine the State as in institutional type of “custom & right” which Society can wield (paradoxically) against an even more “final” shape of power — that of “pure Capitalism”. This is an uncomfortable thought for a good anarchist; we’ve always tended to view the State as the enemy, & capitalism as one of its aspects or “accidents”. The ideal opposite of the anarch is the monarch. [In fact there were some amusing & futile attempts in fin-de-siècle France to forge links between anarchism & monarchism against the common enemy, the fading illusion of “democracy” — & the emerging reality of Capitalism.] In this sense we may have been out-thought by syndicalism & by “council-communism”, which at least developed more mature economic critiques of power. Like the left in general however anarchism collapsed in 1989 (a growing North-american movement for example suddenly imploded) in all likelihood because at that moment our enemy the State also secretly collapsed. In order to move into the gap left by the defeat of Communism we needed a critique of Capitalism as the single power in a unified world. Our careful & sophisticated critique of a world divided into two forms of State/economic power was rendered suddenly irrelevant. In an attempt to rectify this lack, I believe we need a new theory of “nationalism” as well as a new theory of Capitalism (and indeed a new theory of religion as well). So far the only interesting model for this is the EZLN in Mexico — (it’s gratifying to see Zapatista slogans scrawled all over Dublin!) — & it would be worth analyzing their theory-&-praxis for inspiration. The EZLN is the first revolutionary force to define itself in opposition to “global neo-liberalism”; it has done so without aid or influence from the “Internationale” because it appeared in the very same moment that “Moscow” disappeared. It has received the support of the remnants of Liberation Theology as well as the secret councils of Mayan shamans & traditional elders. In the Native-american sense of the word it is a “nationalist” movement, & yet it derives its political inspiration from Zapata, Villa, & Flores Magon (i.e., two agrarian anarcho-syndicalists & one anarcho-communist). It is concerned with “empirical freedoms” rather than purist ideology. [As Qaddafi says, “In need, freedom remains latent”.] No wonder the *NYTimes* called Chiapas the first “post-modern” revolution; in fact, it is the first revolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

James Connolly, one of the founders of the IWW, developed in Ireland a theory that socialism & nationalism were parts of one & the same cause — & for this theory he suffered martyrdom in 1916. From one point of view Connolly’s theory might lead toward “National Socialism” on the Right — but from another point of view it leads to “third world nationalism” on the Left. Now that both these movements are dead it is possible to see more clearly how Connolly’s theory also fits with anarchist & syndicalist ideas of his own period, such as the left volkism of Gustav Landauer or the “General Strike” of Sorel. These ideas in turn can be traced back to Proudhon’s writings on mutualism & “anarcho-federalism”. [The quarrel between Marx & Proudhon was for more unfortunate for history than Marx’s much noisier & more famous quarrel with Bakunin.] Inasmuch as we might propose a “neo-proudhonian” interpretation of the Zapatista uprising, therefore, Connolly’s ideas may take on a new relevance for us [and thus perhaps it’s not surprising if the EZLN sparks a response from the Irish left!]. Nationalism today is headed for a collision with Capitalism, for the simple reason that the nation per se has been redefined by Capital as a zone of depletion. In other words, the nation can either capitulate to Capitalism or else resist it — no third way, no “neutrality” remains possible. The question facing the nation as zone of resistance is whether to launch its revolt from the Right (as “hegemonic particularity”) or from the left (as “non-hegemonic particularity”). Not all nations are zones of resistance, & not all zones of resis-

tance are nations. But wherever the two coincide to some extent the choice becomes not only an ethical but also a political process.

During the American Civil War the anarchist Lysander Spooner refused to support either side — the South because it was guilty of chattel-slavery, the North because it was guilty of wage-slavery — & moreover because it denied the right to secede, and obvious sine qua non of any genuinely free federation. In this sense of the term, nationalism must always be opposed because it is hegemonic — & secession must always be supported inasmuch as it is anti-hegemonic. That is, it can only be supported to the extent that it does not seek power at the expense of others' misery. No State can ever achieve this ideal — but some “national struggles” can be considered objectively revolutionary provided they meet basic minimal requirements — i.e. that they be both non-hegemonic & anti-Capitalist. In the “New World” such movements might perhaps include the Hawaiian secession movement, Puerto Rican independence, maximum autonomy for Native-american “nations”, the EZLN, & at least in theory the bioregionalist movement in the US — and it would probably exclude (with some regrets) such movements as Quebec nationalism, & the militia movement in the US. In Eastern Europe we might see potential in such states as Slovenia, Bosnia, Macedonia, the Ukraine — but not in Serbia nor in Russia. In the “Mid-East” one cannot help supporting Chechnya & the Kurds. In Western Europe the EU must be opposed, & the smaller nations most likely to be crushed by the weight of Eurotrash & Eurodollars should be encouraged to stay out of the Union or to oppose it from within. This includes the Atlantic littoral from Morocco (where Berber resistance & Saharan independence have our sympathy) to Ireland, Denmark, perhaps, Scandinavia, the Baltics, & Finland. Celtic secessionism should be encouraged in Scotland, Wales, Brittany, & Man; this would add a strong socialist & green tint to any possible coalition of small Atlantic States. In Northern Ireland the best possible solution to the “Troubles” might be an independent Ulster based on socialist anti-sectarian solidarity — a dream perhaps but far more interesting than “Peace” at any price — & a free revolutionary Ulster would no doubt release an unbelievable burst of energy into the anti-Capitalist movement — despite its size Ulster would emerge as a leader of any such movement — it would possess tremendous moral prestige.

Since we're indulging in dreams let's imagine that an anti-Communist/anti-Capitalist movement emerges in E. Europe, & allies itself with new movements within Islam, no longer “fundamentalist” & hegemonistic but definitely anti-Capitalist & opposed to “One World” culture. In turn an alliance is made with the anti-capitalist anti-“Europe” states of the Atlantic littoral — & simultaneously within all these countries revolutionary forces are at work for social & economic justice, environmental activism, anti-hegemonic solidarity, & “revolutionary difference”. NGOs & religious groups lend their logistical support to the struggle. Meanwhile we can imagine Capitalism in crisis for any of a myriad reasons, from bank-collapse to environmental catastrophe. Suddenly the radical populist critique of “neo-liberalism” begins to cohere for millions of workers, farmers, tribal peoples, x-class drop-outs & artists, heretics, & even “petit-bourgeois” shopkeepers & professionals...

...“After the Revolution” of course all nationalist forms would have to be carefully reconsidered. The goal of “neo-Proudhonian federalism” would be the recognition of freedom at every point of organization in the rhizome, no matter how small — even to a single individual, or any tiny group of “secessionists”. No doubt these freedoms would have to be ensured through constant struggle against the “natural” tendencies to greed & power-hunger inherent within every individual & every collectivity. But that's a matter for the future. In the present we are faced with the monu-

mental task of constructing an anti-Capitalist resistance movement out of the shattered remnants of radicalism, some glue, some tissue paper, & some hot rhetoric. We can no longer afford the luxury of ignoring politics. This does not mean I'm about to ruin a perfect anarchist record & vote for the first time — since in my country voting means nothing & gains one nothing, not even \$5 or a free drink (as in the old days of Tammany Hall). I mean politics in the Clauswitzian sense. And war makes for strange bedfellows — even for unexpected comrades & allies. I'd like to believe that revolution could be a non-violent “war for peace” — but like a good scout, one should be prepared.

Dublin, Sept. 23, 1996

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# **Pirate Utopias**

**Moorish Corsairs & European Renegadoes**

Hakim Bey

Jan 9, 2003

# Contents

PIRATE AND MERMAID	3
A CHRISTIAN TURN'D TURKE	5
DEMOCRACY BY ASSASSINATION	12
A COMPANY OF ROGUES	18
AN ALABASTER PALACE IN TUNISIA	23
THE MOORISH REPUBLIC OF SALE	32
MURAD REIS AND THE SACK OF BALTIMORE	42
THE CORSAIR'S CALENDAR	53
PIRATE UTOPIAS	61



# PIRATE AND MERMAID

Some years ago a tall tower stood at the extreme end of Cape Marabata; the Christians called Torre Blanquilla (White Tower) and it was known to the Mohammedans as El-Minar. All day long the tower looked out on the sea; at night it was lulled to sleep by the murmur of the wind on the water. It was an ancient tower whose walls were covered with gnarled vines; scorpions hid between her stones, and evil jinn gathered nearby at nightfall. The gypsies, who knew about all things, said the tower was built by the Portuguese who came here to fight against the Mohammedans. The mountaineers of Andjera are better informed; they say the tower was built by Lass el-Behar the pirate in order to hide his treasures within its walls.

Lass el-Behar came from Rabat. He was a skillful navigator; and skilled at an even more difficult art- that of commanding men. The Spaniards and Italians knew his name only too well. El-Behar's frigate was slender and light as a swallow; the oars of a hundred Christian galley slaves made it skim swiftly over the waves. The ship was greatly feared because of the boldness of her sailors and her many cannons, each different from the other, which the pirate had captured from Christian vessels of various nationalities.

Lass el-Behar was young, handsome and brave. Many a captive Christian woman fell deeply in love with him as did the daughters of rich and powerful Mohammedans. But he rejected the love of Christians and mohammedans alike, for his ship meant more to him than the beauty of women. He loved his ship, the companionship of his valiant warriors, and the glorious battles which were later to be celebrated in songs & poetry. Above all, it was the sea he loved; He loved her with so deep a passion that he could not live away from her, and he spoke to her as men speak to their sweethearts. His warriors would say that at the hour of prayer he would turn his eyes away from the direction of Mecca in order to gaze at the sea.

On the day of Aid el-Kbir (sheep sacrifice), Lass el-Behar, who was in the village of El-Minar with his companions-in-arms, declined to go to Tangier to hear the sermon of the cadì and to pray in the company of the devout.

"Go if you must" he said to his men. "As for me I shall rest here."

He shut himself up in his tower; from there he could contemplate the sea and the ships as they moved slowly on the horizon. The charqui, more breeze than wind, made the water dance under the warm summer light. "The best sermon of the cadì," thought el-Behar "could never equal the beauty of this scene? What prayer, be it ever so perfect, could equal the sweet murmur of rippling waters? What on earth is as powerful as the sea, which stretches from one shore of the world to the other? Oh would that the waves were a woman so that I might marry her, and the ocean a mosque in which I might pray."

As these thoughts were running through his mind a storm gathered in the west; it swept over the plains and the mountains, and roared about the tower. The sea gulls cried out in fright and flew away; flocks of sheep ran frantically to their enclosures. The tempest lasted a day and a night.

When the wind quieted down and the sea ceased to bellow like a thousand oxen, Lass el-Behar descended from his tower. On the narrow band of sand which lay between the rocks and the water he saw a woman lying stretched out, white and cold. He approached closer.

"She must be a christian," He said to himself, "for her hair is the color of new gold."

He lifted her up and took her in his arms.

"Perhaps she is still alive."

The woman opened her eyes; they were green eyes, green as the algae that grows in the cracks of rocks. She was a bahria, a jinniyeh (female genie) of the sea. Her beauty was magic and el-Behar fell madly in love with her. He neglected his warriors; he forgot about his swift galley, his glory, even his prayers to Allah.

"I love you more than anything else on earth," he said to her, "more than my life and my salvation"

During the equinox the furious sea again hammered at the tower and threatened the village nearby. Her waters mingled with those of the Charf River and even reached the garden of Tanger el-Balia.

"The ocean is going to smash our tower," said the pirate to his beloved, "let us flee to the mountains."

"Why fear the ocean?" asked the bahria with a smile. "Don't you love her above all things? Aren't you constantly praising her force and her power? Don't you turn your head away from the direction of Mecca in order to gaze out to sea? I am a daughter of the sea. I came here to reward you for the love you bear her. Now the sea calls me back. Farewell, Lass el-behar, you shall never see me again."

"Don't leave me," implored the pirate "don't leave me, I beg of you. Without you I shall never know happiness."

"Happiness," answered the bahria, "belongs only to those who fear Allah and honor him. I must leave you. I dare not disobey the voice that calls me, but you may follow me if you wish."

The jinniyeh wandered off with the tide and Lass el-Behar followed her into the murky depths of the sea. Nor was he ever seen again. He sleeps under the waves between Tarik Mountain (Gibraltar) and Cape Tres-Forcas. He will not waken until that day when men will be judged for their actions and the earth will be a shadow of a shadow which will finally disappear.

For Allah is the Almighty One.

# A CHRISTIAN TURN'D TURKE

“Christians are made Turks and Turks are the sons of devils.”

-Newwes from Sea of WARD THE PIRATE (1609)

From about the late 1500's to the 18th century, many thousands of European men-and women-converted to Islam. Most of them lived and worked in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and the Rabat-Sale area of Morocco-the so-called Barbary Coast States. Most of the women became Moslems when they married Moslem men. This much is easy enough to understand, although it would be fascinating if we could trace the lives of some of them in search of some 17th century Isabelle Eberhardt. [Isabelle Eberhardt, daughter of Russian anarchists, traveled and lived in Algiers, sometimes dressed and passed as a man, converted to Islam, and supported Algerian independence. She wrote romantically about her bizarre and erotic adventures and died young and tragically. See Bowles (1975) and de Voogd (1987).] But what about the men? What caused *them* to convert?

Christian Europeans had a special term for these men: *Renegadoes*, “renegades”: apostates, turncoats, traitors. Christians had some reason for these sentiments, since Christian Europe was still at war with Islam. The Crusades had never really ended. The last Moorish kingdom in Spain, Grenada, was added to the Reconquista only in 1492, and the last Moorish uprising in Spain took place in 1610. The Ottoman Empire, vigorous, brilliant, and armed to the teeth (just like its contemporary Elizabethan/Jacobean England), pressed its offensive against Europe on two fronts, by land toward Vienna, and by sea westward through the Mediterranean.

In the vernacular languages of Europe, “Turk” meant any Muslim, including the Moors of North Africa. The Renegadoes were said to have “Turn'd Turke” (the title of a play, “*A Christian Turn'd Turke*” by Robert Daborne, performed in London in 1612). [Ewen, 1939: 3; Lloyd, 1981: 48. According to Lloyd, the playwright's name was Robert Osbourne.] The Lusty Turk and the Wicked Soldier populated popular literature-and “mussulmano!” is *still* a deadly insult in Venice. One might understand a tiny bit of this European ignorance and prejudice by thinking of the American media during the recent Gulf War with Iraq. Europe's response to Islam since the 19th century has become far more complex, because 19th century Europe actually conquered and colonized much of *Dar al-Islam*. But in the 17th century there existed no such point of interpenetration of cultures, however onesided. For the most part, Europe hated and misunderstood Islam. As for Islam, the word jihad, Holy War, sums up its attitude toward Christendom. Tolerance and understanding were almost non-existent on both sides of the cultural divide.

The Renegadoes therefore seemed like creatures of hellish mystery to most Europeans. Not only had they “betrayed Our Lord,” they had gone even farther and joined the *jihad* itself. Almost to a man, the Renegadoes were employed as “Barbary Corsairs”. They attacked and looted European ships and ravished Christian captives back to Barbary, to be ransomed or sold as slaves. Of course Christian “Corsairs”, including the Knights of Malta, were doing exactly the same thing to the ships and crews of Moslem vessels. But very few of the Moslem captives “turned Christian”. The flow of renegades went largely one way.

Europeans assumed that the apostates were human scum, and believed that their motives for conversion were the lowest imaginable: greed, resentment, revenge. Many of them were already “pirates” when they converted-obviously they simply wanted an excuse for more piracy. Of course, some of them were captured and offered a choice of conversion or slavery. But like cowards, they chose apostasy and crime. [Clearly at least some of the Renegadoes were quite eager to convert. An arrogant French Consul to Algiers (1731-2) named Leon Delane, “who had previously served as French consul in Candia (Crete) and had caused much trouble by his haughtiness and scorn for the Turks, interfered with the attempt by a sailor from St. Tropez to turn renegade, although the treaty between the two states specifically stated (Article 19) that if a Frenchman persisted for three consecutive days in his intention to turn Muslim he should be so recognized.” Delane was transferred back to Crete by an embarrassed French government [Spencer, 1976: 159]] Renegadoes were slain on sight in all European countries and burnt to death in Spain (at least in theory), even if they wanted to re-convert. In this sense Islam was seen as a kind of moral plague, rather than simply an enemy ideology.

Within Islamdom the attitude toward conversion can be described as more open. The Spanish forced Jews and Moslems to convert, but then expelled them anyway. Islam however still retained an image of itself as a new religion seeking to expand by all possible means, and especially by conversion. “New Muslims” are still considered blessed and even “lucky”, especially on the frontiers of Islam. These differing attitudes toward the act of conversion help to explain how more Christians turn’d Turke than vice versa-but the question “why?” remains unanswered. [One Captain Hamilton explained the motive which induced some Renegadoes to stay on in Barbary: “They are tempted to forsake their God for the love of Turkish [i.e., Moslem] women who are generally very beautiful.” He forgave the poor wretches their weakness, for these women “are well versed in witchcraft. . . captives never get free.” [Wolfe, 1979: 237]] Perhaps we can begin by assuming that neither the Christian nor the “Turkish” interpretation of the Renegadoes can satisfy our curiosity. We may doubt, on the one hand, that these men were all simply demonic, and, on the other, that they were all angels of the *jihad*. We can assume that our answers-if any prove possible will seem far more *complex* than either of these 17th century theories.

Curiously enough, it appears that few modern historians have really tried to understand the Renegadoes. Among European historians the effect of the “demon theory” still lingers, although it has been rationalized and elaborated and even inverted into a plausible-sounding hypothesis. The reasoning goes something like this: How did the great European powers fail to eradicate the Barbary corsairs for *three schole centuries*? It goes without saying that Islamic military and naval technology was inferior to European. Moslems, as everyone knows, make bad sailors. How to explain this apparent conundrum? Obviously-the Renegadoes. They, as *Europeans*, introduced European technology to the Moslems, and fought for them as well. It appears therefore that Barbary piracy was “*une affaire des etrangers*”, without the Renegadoes it could never have happened [Coindreau, 1948]. They were traitors of the worst sort-but brilliant in their crude and thuggish way. Piracy is despicable-but, after all, a bit romantic!

As for Islamic historians, they naturally resent any suggestions of Islamic inferiority. The 19th and early 20th century local histories of Rabat-Sale, for example, make it quite clear that the Moors, Berbers and Arabs of the country contributed, in the long run, far more to the history of the “holy war at sea” than did a few thousand converts. As for the converts themselves, their descendants still live in Rabat-Sale they *became Morrocans*, whatever their origins. The history of

the corsairs is not “an affair of foreigners”, but part of the history of the Maghreb, the Far West of Islam, and of the emerging Moroccan nation [Hesperis, 1971].

None of these “explanations” of the Renegadoes gets us any closer to their possible motives for embracing Islam along with the life of the Barbary corsairs. Brilliant traitors or assimilated heroes-neither stereotype possesses any real depth. Both contain elements of truth. The pirates did introduce certain technical and strategic novelties to Barbary, as we shall see. And they did participate in Islam in more complex ways than simply as hired thugs-or “experts”-as we shall also see. But we still have no inkling of the “*why?*” of the whole phenomenon. We should note at once that although some of the Renegadoes were literate in numerous languages, none were *literati*. We have no firsthand accounts, no texts by Renegadoes. Their social origins did not dispose them to selfanalytical writing; that luxury was still a monopoly of the aristocracy and emerging middle class. The pen of history is in the hand of the enemies of the Renegadoes; they themselves are silent.

Thus we may never be able to uncover their motives Perhaps we can do no more than suggest a number of complex and even contradictory impressions and speculations. But we can still do better than the neocolonialist Euro-historians, or the Moroccan nationalists, who both see the Renegadoes only in relation to their own ideological preconceptions. We can try to appreciate the Renegadoes for themselves, as individuals (if possible) and as a group, with their own interests and agendas, their own values, their own selfimage. We can attempt to see (as clearly as the evidence allows) from inside the phenomenon, rather than depend on the light of outside interpretations.

To focus attention on a *specific history* (or “microhistory”, as C. Ginzberg put it) might help us to refine our perceptions of the Renegadoes more easily than if we attempted a global view of the entire phenomenon. [This essay will not constitute a genuine microhistory because it is based largely on secondary sources. I simply wish to express a methodological debt to Ginzberg and his school, without claiming in any way to match them for rigor and originality.] The methodology used here consists of reading historical/ethnographical texts in the light of “the History of Religions”. I prefer to call this framework *histories of religion* however, for two reasons: First, to avoid the imputation that I adhere to the school of Eliade, which has almost monopolized the label “History of Religions” for itself. I use some of the categories developed by Eliade, also by Henry Corbin, but find them less useful in dealing with concepts such as “resistance” or “insurrectionary desire”. Which leads to the second reason for preferring the term *histories of religion* any academic discipline which calls itself The History of anything whatsoever must be suspected *a priori* of erecting a false *totality* based on dubious absolutes which will serve only to mask and reinforce the ideologies of elites. Therefore the third chief methodological ingredient of this essay derives from a Nietzschean history of ideas, images, emotions, aesthetic signs, etc., as developed by G. Bachelard, W. Benjamin, G. Bataille, M. Foucault, etc.-an historical discipline which begins by questioning and criticizing the absoluteness of *History* as anything other than an *idea* with a history of its own. And finally, the chief methodological tool here is really *piratology*, which-as everyone knows-is exclusively the province of enthusiastic amateurs.

So we'll center our study around one community in one brief period (about 50 years): Rabat-Sale, in the first half of the 17th century. Of all the Barbary states, Sale was the only one in which the corsairs achieved independence. Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were all protectorates of the Sublime Porte, but Sale-for a few decades-was governed by a “divan” or Council of Corsair Captains. It was a true “pirate utopia”, and thus we can hope to find the Renegado in his most

evolved form, his most sophisticated political and spiritual state of development, here in the “Republic of Bou Regreg”, the “Moorish” or “Corsair Republic of Sale”.

First however, we can also try something which none of the historians (as far as I know) has yet done for the Renegadoes. We can ask if Europe really was monolithically opposed to Islam. We can ask if Islam possessed a *positive shadow*, so to speak, which might have hidden itself within European culture, and might have influenced the Renegadoes even before their escape to Barbary. We might give them the benefit of the doubt, and not simply assume that their motives for conversion were all base and empty of real significance. We might wonder if Islam itself (and not just the hope of pirate gold) could have attracted them to North Africa -or, if not “Islam itself”, then some image or rumor or myth or misconception of Islam. In what way, then, might a 17th century working-class mariner have acquired an interest in or even an attraction toward Islam?

[map image here]

At the time of the Crusades the idea of an “esoteric Islam” began to sift back to Europe along with all the spices and silks-and books-the holy warriors of Christ managed to “liberate” from the Holy Land. Did the Ismaili “Assassins” pass along some secret knowledge to the Templars? And is this why the Templars were proscribed, tortured, executed, extirpated with such seemingly insane hatred? Were alchemy and neoplatonism passed along through Moorish Spain to the rest of Europe, especially Italy and France? Did St. Francis and Roger Bacon and other mystical missionaries to the Saracens bring back with them some elements of Islamic gnosis, hermetic science, and Sufism?

In any case, whether these contacts really occurred or not, by the beginning of the 17th century some European intellectuals *believed* they had occurred, and that some real transmission of secret wisdom had in fact been carried out. (The reality or irreality of such contacts is a subject for research; here we are concerned only with a history of *images*, of beliefs and ideas, which profoundly influence human society whether or not they are based in “historical reality”.) The late Renaissance Hermeticists began to demonstrate a touch of Islamophilia. Around 1610 (the date of the last Moorish or “Morisco” revolt in Spain), some German occultists released a series of documents outlining the history of a secret order, the Rosicrucians. According to their account, the 14th-century founder of the Order, the probably-mythical Christian Rosenkreutz, had traveled widely in the Islamic world (Damascus, Arabia, a mythical city called Damcar, and the Moroccan city of Fez) and received there a complete course in Hermetic wisdom. His tomb, which had supposedly been recently re-discovered, contained enough coded illumination to make possible the revival of the Order. The Rosicrucian documents created a great stir among learned and pious Christians who had grown quite disgusted with the wars and quarrels of Catholicism and Protestantism, and yearned for a universal religion based on knowledge rather than faith. Islamic (and Jewish) science and wisdom were now eagerly desired for their contributions to this final Hermetic revelation. Publicly the Rosicrucians taught “tolerance even for Jews and Turks”; secretly they might have admitted that no one religion possessed the monopoly of truth. They remained Christians, but not “sectarians”. Islam, for them, appears as simply another sect, in possession of some of the truth (including even certain truths about Jesus), but no more and no less limited than Catholicism or even Lutheranism. Thus, while the Rosicrucians did not convert to Islam, they exhibited far less hatred and intolerance for it than most Christians and even went so far as to praise it for its esoteric and occult traditions.

In a broader context, Islam might have had a sort of vague appeal for some Europeans who were simply anti-religious or at least anti-clerical (along the lines, for instance, of the Elizabethan

“School of Night”, and Marlowe's quip that “Moses was a juggler”). A general impression of Islam's freedom from any authoritative priesthood or even dogma had percolated into European culture, or would soon do so. A long line of European intellectual Islamophiles began to appear. Rosicrucianism influenced Freemasonry which influenced the Enlightenment which influenced Nietzsche. Some of these tendencies and individuals actually knew something about Islam, but for the most part it was simply a matter of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Priests hate Islam; I hate priests; therefore I like Islam. Even in the 1880's Nietzsche's view of Islam was still rather two-dimensional-he seemed to see it as a sodality of aristocratic warrior monks-but his image of Islam was the culmination of a *tradition of free-thinkers* who viewed it primarily as a kind of *anti-Christianity*

Hermeticism in turn influenced certain less intellectual tendencies within Protestantism. Many of the extremists who were to carry out the English Revolution in the 1640's had been influenced by Jacob Boehme and other Hermetic- leaning Christian mystics. Even the working-class Levellers, Diggers, and Ranters had some acquaintance with Hermetic ideas and ideals-such as the esoteric interpretation of Scripture; universal tolerance; “pantheistic monism”; direct contact with the divine, without the intermediation of priest or Church; a tendency to antinomianism; a belief in the sacred quality of material Nature; an inclination to view “God” as “Universal Reason” (or *mind*); faith in the power of the imagination to change reality; social egalitarianism; the millennium or “World Turn'd Upside Down”; etc.

No evidence suggests that any Ranter ever took an interest in Islam. However, there exists some reason to believe in connections between Ranterism and piracy. A “Ranter's Bay” in Madagascar sheltered a pirate utopia later in the 17th century, and a number of Ranters were exiled to the Caribbean during the “Golden Age of Piracy” there. Certain aspects of Islamic thought might well appeal to extremist Protestants- such as anti-trinitarianism, the human but magical nature of Jesus, scriptural hermeneutic, “spiritual democracy”, even the concept of Holy War. The Ranters (or other similar sects), who specialized in daring and outrageous spiritual paradox and antinomian extremism, might have had some influence on the kind of marginalized and rebellious men who were destined to end up in Algiers or Sale. [Besides the standard works by Hill (1978) and Cohn (1970), see Friedman (1987); Morton (1970); Smith (1983). For Ranter-Pirate connections see Hill (1985: 161-187).]

A ranter or proto-Ranter, who liked to “blaspheme gloriously” and preach in taverns while drinking and smoking, with a whore perched on his knee, might also have been attracted by the European image of Islam's *sensuality*. In effect Islam is a more pro-sexual religion than Christianity, and to some extent views pleasure as divine beneficence. The Koranic heavens of houris, cupbearers, gardens, and fountains of wine, have always been notorious among Christians dissatisfied with their own tradition's emphasis on chastity, virginity, and self-mortification. On the popular level the stereotype of the “Lusty Turk” preserved a caricature of this holy sensuality of Islam. The Orient began to be viewed (usually covertly) as a place where forbidden desires might be realized.

Finally, Islam was the Enemy of European Christian civilization. As M. Rediker (1987) has pointed out, by the 17th century the maritime world already revealed certain aspects of the Industrial Age which loomed so closely on the future's horizon. Ships were in some ways like floating factories, and maritime workers constituted a kind of proto-proletariat. Labor conditions in the merchant marines of Europe presented an abysmal picture of emerging capitalism at its worst-and conditions in European navies were even more horrendous. The sailor had every reason to

consider himself the lowest and most rejected figure of all European economy and government-powerless, underpaid, brutalized, tortured, lost to scurvy and storms at sea, the virtual slave of wealthy merchants and ship-owners, and of penny-pinching kings and greedy princes. C. Hill and Rediker, basing themselves on earlier work by J. Lemisch, have both pointed out that in such a context, piracy must be studied as a form of social resistance. The pirate, who (in the words of one of Defoe's interviewees) "warred against all the world", was first and foremost the enemy of his own civilization. And once again, "the enemy of my enemy" just might prove to be my friend. I hate Europe. Europe hates Islam. Therefore...might I perhaps like Islam? What might a literate but not specially learned English reader know about Islam in, say, 1637? In that year an ambassador from the Moorish Corsair Republic of Sale visited London, and some professional journalist churned out a pamphlet on this marvel. He says,

For their religion, they are strict observers of the law of Mahomet; they say Christ was a great Prophet, borne to bee a Saviour of the world (but not incarnate), that hee was the Breath of God, that hee was borne of a Virgin, and that the Jewes should have beleev'd in him, but would not; and therefore, because they went about to murder and crucifie him, he left them, and ascended from them into Heaven, and that then they put another man to death instead of him, whom they tormented and cruelly crucified. Therefore these Mahometans doe hold and esteeme the Jewes as the worst of men, and very slaves to all nations of the world.

The one and onely booke of their religion is called their Alcaron, devised by their false prophet Mahomet who was of their nation, a Larbee Arab. They may not use any other booke for devotion, nor, on paine of losse of life, no part of it doe they dare to examine or question; but if any be diffident, or any point or sentence be intricate and hard to be understood by any of them, then it is lawful to aske the meaning of the talby which is a poore weake-learned priest. They are all circumciz'd, and they use a kind of baptisme, but not in their churches, but at home in their houses.

Their Lent is much about the time as it is with us, which they doe hold but 30 dayes; but they neither eate nor drinke all the time on any of those dayes betwixt the dawning and the twilight, but when once the starres doe shew themselves, then, for their day fast, they feed fast all night. That priest or talby that cannot read over the booke of the Alcaron (or Mahomets Law) all over on their Good Friday at night is held unworthy of his place and function. They say their prayers six times every day and night, and they doe wash themselves all over very often. They have no bells to toll them to church, but he that is the clarke or sexton hath a deepe base great voyce, and goes to the top of the steeple, and there roares out a warning for the people to come to their devotions. No man doth enter their churches with his shoes on. Their talbies or priests each one of them are allowed a wife or wives if they will. The lay-men may have captive women, but they must not Iye with them in the night-time, for that belongs to the wives by turne, and, if any wife be beguiled of her turne, she may complaine for satisfaction to the magistrate. He that hath foure wives must be a rich man; a poore man is allowed as many, but his meanes are too short to keepe them; therefore one or two must serve his turne. The bride and bridegroom do not see each other before the wedding-night that they are going to bed, where, if he finde her a maid, all is well; if otherwise, hee may turne her away and give her no part of the portion she brought him.

Their churchmen are not covetous or lovers of money or riches, for which cause they doe daily in every towne and citty sit every day to heare and decide causes, which must be proved by such witnesses as are not detected or knowne to be defamed for being drunkards, adulterers, prophaners, scandaliz'd persons, (for if they be knowne to be such, their testimony will not be



taken). Likewise if the defendant can prove that the witnesse, which hath beene against him, hath not said his prayers six times duely in 24 houres, he or they shall utterly be disabled to beare witnesse, or give testimony in any cause whatsoever; but upon just and honest proofes the most tedious suite is ended in a weeke or eight daies at the most.

They are just in their words and promises; for the which cause there is small use of bills, bonds, or obligations amongst them (which is the cause that there is scarce one rich scrivener either in Morocco, Fesse or Sus), for the breach of promise is held an unrecoverable disgrace amongst them. He that is taken with false weights or measures doth lose all his ware in his house to the use of the poore, and is a defamed person, and cruelly whipt. Their execution for life and death is that commonly the person adjudged to die hath his throat cut by the executioner.

Altogether an interesting mix of fact and fancy, and on the whole quite positive [Sources Inedites: 381-384]. We shall return to all these speculative themes and try to focus them more clearly in the specific context of the Corsair Republic of Sale. But before we can carry out such an operation we need to know more about the historical context of the Republic, and its chief economic resource-piracy. Specifically, we need to know more about the history of the whole Barbary Coast, and the Ottoman Protectorates of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli.

# DEMOCRACY BY ASSASSINATION

“The Algerians are a company of rogues, and I am their captain.”

The Dey of Algiers to a European Consul [Spencer, 1976: 58]

Tunis, Tripoli, and especially Algiers, have been studied much more thoroughly than Sale; the interested reader will easily find an extensive bibliography-so it will not repay our time to devote too much detailed attention here to the Mediterranean coast states. Almost any book on pirate history will tell something about Algiers, and there are many works devoted exclusively to its history. Sale, which was smaller and more distant from the gaze of Europe, interests us not only because it's less well-known, but also because of its *political independence*. Even so, Sale was part of a “big picture” which we need to know at least in outline. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1953 edition), which doesn't even mention Sale in its entry on “Barbary Pirates”, gives us this:

The power of the piratical coast population of northern Africa arose in the 16th century, attained its greatest height in the 17th, declined gradually throughout the 18th, and was extinguished only in the 19th century. From 1659 onwards the coast cities of Algeria and Tunisia, though nominally forming parts of the Turkish empire, were in fact anarchical military republics which chose their own rulers and lived by plunder. The maritime side of this long-lived brigandage was conducted by captains, or *reises*, who formed a class or even a corporation. Cruisers were fitted out by capitalists and commanded by the *reises*. The treasury of the pasha or his successors who bore the title of Agha or Dey or Bey, received 10% of the value of the prizes .... Until the 17th century the pirates used galleys, but Simon Danser, a Flemish renegade, taught them the advantages of using sailing ships. In the first half of the 17th century more than 20,000 captives were said to be imprisoned in Algiers alone. The rich were allowed to redeem themselves, but the poor were condemned to slavery. Their masters would not in many cases allow them to secure freedom by professing Mohammadanism. In the early part of the 19th century, Tripolitania, owing to its piratical practices, was several times involved in war with the United States. After the general pacification of 1815, the British made two vain attempts to suppress Algerian piracy, which was ended only by the French conquest of Algiers in 1830.

Note that Islam is called “Mohammadanism”. Note that these piratical “Mohammadans” refused “in many cases” to permit conversion; the logical conclusion is that in *some* cases they *did* permit it-but the author prefers to avoid this conclusion, and to speak only in negative terms about mere “Mohammadans” and pirates.

Two interesting political terms are used here- “anarchical” and “capitalists”-which may not be quite appropriate. “Capitalist” sounds too 18-19th century to describe the merchants and ship-owning captains who fueled the economy of the corsair states. Moreover, I presume the author is not thinking of *anarchism* when he uses the term “anarchical” but is simply brandishing this word to indicate *violent disorder*. Algiers was subject to the Ottomans Empire, and thus could not have attained an anarchist form of organization in any strict sense of the word. As for the charge of “violent disorder”, some scholars have asked how Algiers could have survived for centuries

as a “corsair state” without some kind of internal continuity and stability. Earlier Eurocentric historians and sensationalist writers on piracy give us an impression of Algiers as a kind of ravening horde in a state of perpetual arousal; while more recent and less chauvinistic scholars like William Spencer (1976) tend to emphasize the stability of Algiers and to seek for possible explanations for its successful duration. The quasi-moralistic horror embedded in a term like “anarchical”, as applied to North Africa, tends to obscure the secret fact that historians are frequently in the business of providing retrospective justifications for the imperialism and colonialism-the truly hideous rapacity-of 18-19th century Europe. If Algiers can be shown as a sinkhole of all decent human values, then we are permitted to go on believing in the “civilizing mission” of Europe's subsequent African and other colonial adventures. Hence the need for a massive *revising* of history as written by European (and Euro-American) pseudo-rationalist apologists for piracy practiced by White Christian Nation States, as opposed to piracy practiced by mere Moorish “anarchicists”. [A useful term for the pirate enclaves-perhaps still not quite the mot juste-might be “ordered anarchy”, originally applied by E. E. Evans-Pritchard to the tribal organization of the Nuer, and quoted by Richard Drinnon, who re-applies it to the “red-white republic of Fredonia” founded in Texas by the Cherokee chief Richard Fields and the fascinating John Dunn Hunter- a white who'd been captured by Indians as an infant, went to London where he met Robert Owen and other radicals, and returned to America in 1824. Hunter was another kind of Renegado-a convert to “Indianism”- and as such was hated and denounced. Fredonia failed and Hunter was murdered in 1827 [Drinnon, 1972: 208]]

In truth the government of Algiers seems to have been neither anarchical nor anarchist-but rather, in a strange and unexpected way-*democratic*. Unlike the European nations, gradually succumbing to the Absolutism of the Kings, Algiers exhibited signs of a more “horizontal” and egalitarian structure. In theory, of course, it was at all times subordinate to Turkish imperial policy and direction, but in practice the city-state was run by various “chambers” of Janissary soldiers and corsair notables, who made their own policy-and sometimes sent the Sultan's representatives scurrying back to Istanbul with a blunt refusal to carry out the will of the Sublime Porte.

To a certain extent the protectorates or “Regencies” of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli really were “affairs of foreigners”, and perhaps might even be called quasi-colonies. In Algiers the *Ocak* or ruling body of Janissaries was made up-by law-not by natives of the regions (Moors, Arabs, Berbers) but rather by “Turks”. But of course, as a further complication, the Janissary corps were originally not native Anatolians or even born Moslems, but *slaves of the Sultan*, recruited as children under the Ottoman “boy tax” which operated in such outlying areas of the imperium as Christian Albania; they were trained, converted to Islam, and at first were used as the Ottoman equivalent of the Praetorian Guard. The Barbarosa brothers, who founded the Regency of Algiers, were Albanians or perhaps Greek Islanders by birth. They however received permission to begin recruiting native Anatolians into the Algerian branch of the corps, and eventually even European Renegadoes were admitted. The *Ocak*, like the knights of Saint John of Malta, comprised a military order in a holy war, and an occupying army, and a government, all in one. It seems that not one of the *Ocak* was ever born in North Africa-and in fact if a Janissary married a native woman and had children, these children were refused membership in the *Ocak* (a situation which led to several unsuccessful rebellions by such “half-breeds”). Native Algerians could and did rise to eminence and power- as *corsairs*-but never as military administrators. Hamida Reis, the last great 19th-century Algerian captain (Ar. *ra'is*), was a pure Kayble Berber. But in Algiers he was something of an exception. In any case, the “democracy” of the *Ocak* excluded native Algerians- and yet it

also tended toward greater and greater independence from Turkey. If it was a “colony” of sorts, it was nevertheless only loosely connected to the homeland, unlike the later “departments” of the French. And the “Turks” always remained closer to the natives than any 19th century European colonists by virtue of a shared religion. However much the Moors and Berbers may have hated the Turks, they joined forces with them when Spanish or French fleets loomed over the horizon.

We want to compare the government of Algiers with that of Sale, which was perhaps in part modeled on it. But the comparison of Algiers and Sale will have only a limited usefulness for us precisely because of the former's Ottoman ties. Over the centuries Algiers absorbed a great deal of Turkish culture. The Janissaries were largely devoted to the Bektashi Sufi Order, a rather heterodox confraternity which sometimes used wine ritually, and exhibited many Turkic-shamanic features [Birge, 1937]. The famous Janissary marching music was originally a Sufi invention. Pere Dan, a priest who came to Algiers in the 1630's to ransom captives and stayed on to produce an important history of the Regency, describes the investiture of Abd al-Hassan Ali in 1634 upon his arrival from Constantinople as the new triennial pasha:

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The city sent out two well-equipped galleys to do him honor. The officer corps of the Divan assembled in the number of five hundred to receive him at the port, where as he disembarked from his galley he was received with a salute of some fifteen hundred guns from the city forts and the corsair ships some forty of which came out under sail. There then marched the Agha of the Janissaries accompanied by two drummers (Cavus), followed by the Principal Secretary with the 24 Ayabashis who are the chief Counselors of State. There followed two by two the Bulukbashis with their huge plumed turbans, then the ranks of the Odabashis; there marched after them six Turkish oboists with Moors among them some playing flutes and other cymbals, the whole ensemble a very strange noise which aroused in us more fear than pleasure. Last came the new Pasha, enveloped as a mark of peace in a vast white robe. He rode a fine Barbary steed richly harnessed with a silver bridle studded with gems, spurs and stirrups, reins of silk all laden with turquoises and an embroidered saddle-cloth elaborately worked. In this order the procession entered the city and the Pasha was taken to the residence designated for him.

[Spencer, 1976]

It's interesting that Pere Dan mentions the terror roused in “our” European hearts by the music. The Janissaries appear to have been the very first in history to use military marching music, and when their bands appeared blaring and booming before the gates of Vienna, it's said that Christian soldiers threw down their weapons and fled at the mere sound. It would be interesting to know if the *Ocak* ever shipped a band aboard a corsair vessel (the Algerian Janissaries accompanied the pirates as men-at-arms, used only when a prize ship was boarded and subdued by force). The European pirates who operated in the Caribbean and Indian oceans in the 17-18th century are reputed to have been very fond of music, and to have hired on full-time professionals when they could afford to, but apparently the music was for their own pleasure rather than a form of psychological warfare! [Spencer has this note on the various kinds of music to be heard in Algiers: Algerian music was primarily military in nature, reflecting its Ottoman origins. The *ocak* military band consisted of twenty-seven pieces: eight large drums called *davul*, played with the fingers; five kettledrums (*nakkare*); ten bugles; two trumpets; and two pairs of cymbals. The type of music was *mehter*, a strongly accented rhythmic style popularized in the Ottoman Empire by the Janissary corps and synonymous with Ottoman military pomp and power. A second popular type of music was the Andalusian, brought by Morisco refugees from Spain and incorporating

the use of such Oriental instruments as the 'oud, tar, rebab (a two-stringed violin), and ney (a reed flute) featured in Anatolian Mevlevi dervish compositions, on a semitonal scale. During the period of the Regency, Andalusian orchestras of twenty or thirty persons could often be heard in Algerian cafes, "playing all by ear, and hastening to pass the time quickly from one measure to another, yet all the while with the greatest uniformity and exactness, during a whole night," as Renaudot tells us.]

In Sale the Sufi and military Turkish music would have been unknown, but Andalusian music—a complex of Persian, Arab, Moorish, Iberian, and other influences, developed over centuries in Islamic Spain and now suddenly exiled to North Africa—must have been imported to Sale by various waves of Moors and Moriscos from Spain; new Berber and African influences would have been added to the mix giving birth to classical North Moroccan music more-or-less as it's played today and still called *Andalusi*.

Sale, by contrast with the other Barbary states, remained free of Ottoman control or even much influence. A close relation between Algiers and Saïdine corsairs (discussed below) probably led to some Turkish cultural influence in Sale. For instance, Sale celebrated a special holiday with the old Turkish custom of a candlelight procession. But Sale was at all times either a Moroccan possession or a free Moorish Corsair state, and no "foreigners" ever seized power there in the name of an alien government.

Structurally, the most notable feature of the Algerian *Ocak* was its system of "democracy by seniority." In theory—and for the most part even in practice—a recruit rose up through the ranks at the rate of one every three years. If he survived long enough, he'd serve as commander-in-chief or "Agha of Too Moons"... for two months. He would then retire into the Divan or *Ocak* chamber of government with a vote on all important issues and appointments. All this had nothing to do with "merit", but was simply a matter of *time served*. The lowliest Albanian slave-boy or peasant lad from the Anatolian outback, and the outcast converted European captive sailor, could equally hope one day to participate in government—simply by *staying alive* and serving the "Corsair republic", which was the real power-structure within the Ottoman protectorate. As Pere Dan put it: "The state has only the name of a kingdom since, in effect, they have made it into a republic." No wonder the *Ocak* never seemed to have trouble recruiting new members. Where else in the world was such "upward mobility" possible?

The Divan itself used one of the strangest "rules of order" ever devised by any group anywhere in the world:

The rules covering the meetings of the divan were simple enough. No member was allowed to carry arms of any kind, and armed guards maintained order. No member was allowed to use his fists for any offensive action on pain of death, but he was allowed to express his feelings with his feet, either by stomping or by kicking. One French consul was nearly killed when he was "footed" in the divan. All speech was in Turkish; dragomen translated into Berber or Arabic and the European languages when necessary. The "word" was taken in order of seniority or importance, although the most usual practice seems to have been for the speaker to orchestrate a chorus of shouting by the assembly. These sessions were incredibly disorderly as a result of this procedure. Foreigners who attended were often convinced that they were dealing with wild, violent, irrational men; the evidence seems to point to the fact that the leaders used this procedure to emphasize their programs and to shout down any objections. To an Englishman, however, such procedures seemed irrational; for instance, Francis Knight, who, in the second quarter of the 17th

century spent several years in Algiers as a slave, was apparently able to witness meetings of the divan. His account of procedures is worth repeating:

“They stand in ranks, passing the word by *chouse* or *pursuivant*, jetting each other with their arms or elbows, raising their voices as if in choler or as a pot boileth with the addition of fire.... They have a wise prevention of a greater mischief, for [they] are commanded upon deepest pains not to drink wine or any strong liquor before coming...or to carry a knife thither.... It is such a government like which there is nowhere else in the world...”

[Wolfe, 1979: 78] In the course of its long run for the money, Algiers witnessed every sort of skullduggery, riot, rebellion, corruption, political murder, and disorder known to the human condition-and yet somehow survived and thrived. Some have gone so far as to define its form of government as l'democracy by assassination“. But was it any more corrupt or violent than any other state in the 17th (or any other) century? Was it so much more chaotic than, say, the European monarchies, so wild that it could boast of a freedom obtained-at least for the successful few-and obtainable only through chaos? Or do the accounts (by European visitors, remember) over-stress the negative and present us with a wicked caricature of Algiers? My suspicion is that the daily life of the City was no more or less violent over the long haul of history than the daily life of many another human group. But Algiers was different because its very economy depended on violence *outside* its borders-the acts of the corsairs. And it *was* more democratic than the European or Islamic monarchies. Are these two features somehow *connected* I prefer to leave it a question.

The corsair equivalent of the Divan was the *Taiffe reisi*, or Council of Captains. Unfortunately we know a good deal less about it than about the Divan, because the corsairs had no Ottoman bureaucrats and *hocas* (learned scribes) to serve them as record-keepers. The Taiffe has been compared to a medieval guild, but this is misleading to the extent that the Corsairs' proto-labor-union was also a de facto ruling (or at least consultative) body within the Regency. The Divan and the Taiffe may sometimes have competed or clashed in power struggles, but we may be sure that neither body would lightly risk alienating the other. The Corsairs depended on the *Ocak* for political protection, funding, and a supply of men-at-arms. The Divan depended on the Taiffe for its economic life-blood, the very prosperity of the Regency, which lived, in large part on pirate booty and ransom fees. Apparently the Divan of Sale was based on the structure of the taiffe of Algiers (rather than on the structure of the Divan of the *Ocak*), so it's a pity we know so little about Taiffe organization. Unlike the *Ocak*, seniority would obviously not work as a *modus operandi*. The reis was a captain either through sheer merit (or “luck” as most pirates would call it), or because he owned a ship or two. Of course, again, a lowly pirate cabin boy (like Hamida Reis) could hope to become Admiral of the Fleet some day, whatever his class or race origins-a far different situation than in, say, the British Navy! And we know that the Taiffe voted democratically on issues and to select its leaders. Altogether it may well be that the 16-17th century Algerian Divan-and-Taiffe form of “bicameralism” can be seen as a precursor to the republican governments of America and France, which came into being only centuries later; as for the genuine Republic of Sale, it preceded even the protectorate/Commonwealth structure of revolutionary England (1640's and 50's). A strange thought: Does European democracy actually owe a direct debt to the 'Corsairs? No one would ever have admitted it openly, of course, since the Barbary corsairs were heathen-but as Rediker points out, sailors were the 17th century's proletariat, and we might imagine whispers circulating from ship to ship (England sent a fleet to Sale in 1637!) about the enviable freedoms of

the 'worsairs and Renegadoes. [In 1659, the Ottoman-appointed Pasha demanded a bigger cut of the Gorsairs' booty: This produced a revolution that ended the powers of the pasha of Algiers. A boulouk-bachi, Khalil, rallied the divan to an insurrection to "re-establish the ancient ways." These "ancient ways" were alleged to be a constitution that placed all effective powers in the hands of the janissary agha and the divan. Of course, this was pure mythology, but like revolutionaries in mid-seventeenth-century England, France, Barcelona, Naples, and elsewhere, the Algerian divan insisted that it only wanted a return to ancient forms. No one in this era would admit to being a "revolutionary." The result, however, was revolutionary. A few years later d'Aranda could write, "The pasha...acknowledges a kind of subjection to the Grand Seigneur in words, but takes little account of his orders... The soldiers are more dreadful to him than the Grand Seigneur." They had become the rulers of Algiers, leaving the pasha as a ceremonial officer, paid a regular salary, but without power. [Wolfe, 1979: 84]]

## A COMPANY OF ROGUES

We must skip over the fascinating unfolding of political structures in the subsequent history of Algiers, simply because it cannot offer us much help in understanding our chief interest, Sale. As for what we might call the specific ethnography or socio-history of Algerian piracy, we will certainly return to it for comparative material when discussing, say, the erotic mores or economic arrangements of the Corsairs of Bou Regreg in Morocco. But one more Algerian theme must detain us before we depart for the Far West- the Renegadoes.

A huge proportion-some say the majority of Algerian captains and crews were indeed “foreigners” of some sort or another. Andalusian Moors and Moriscos from Spain introduced new techniques in armor and cannon, and many of them proved experienced mariners as well. A medley of “Levantines” from the Eastern Mediterranean-including Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, islanders, and the usual riffraff and scum of every port-served the *jihād* in Algiers. Albanians and other Balkan/Ottoman mountaineers and brigands floated in along with the Turkish contingent. And of course there were Renegadoes from every country of Europe (especially the Mediterranean littoral), whether volunteers or converted captives:

Between 1621 and 1627 there were said to be twenty thousand Christian captives in the corsair capital, including “Portuguese, Flemish, Scots, English, Danes, Irish, Hungarians, Slavs, Spanish, French, Italians; also Syrians, Egyptians, Japanese, Chinese, South Americans, Ethiopians,” which attests to the polyglot ethnicity of seafaring in those days. The records kept by Redemptionists on apostasy are equally revealing, although painful to the apostolic ego. Between 1609 and 1619, Gramaye observed, renegades who willingly abjured their faith for the comforts of Islam included “857 Germans, 138 Hamburgmen, 300 English, 130 Dutch and Flemings, 160 Danes and Easterlings, 250 Poles, Hungarians and Muscovites.”

[Spencer, 1976: 127]

Once a whole army of Spaniards embraced Islam to avoid captivity, and were apparently completely absorbed- and even a few Black Africans, brought north in slave caravans, who purchased their own freedom and joined the great corsair gold-rush. Jews, both native and foreign (including Marranos and Convertados from Spain, and other Sephardic groups), served all the Barbary states as merchants and financiers, and frequently obtained great power in the councils of government. European merchants, consuls, and redemptionist friars and priests provided a small shocked audience for this exotic rainbow coalition of rogues, and luckily some of them wrote up their impressions and memoirs. The pirates themselves have left us not a word.

The hero and beau ideal of the Corsairs was Khairaddin (Khizr) Barbarossa (Redbeard), the greatest scion of a family of sea-rovers (probably Albanian in origin but resident on Lesbos), who first arrived in the Western Mediterranean as an agent of the declining Mameluke power of Egypt. From Tunis, he and his brothers joined with Moors from Granada to raid Spanish coasts. They raised their own freelance fleet and sold their services to various North African regimes; when possible they would assassinate the local ruler and take over the town (Bougie, 1512, Jijelli,



1514, Algiers, 1515); the island of Djerba for a time served as their headquarters. Around 1518, hard pressed by Spain, Khairaddin appealed for aid to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I (the "Grim"), and was appointed vice-regent or *beylerbey* of Algiers. He finally managed to expel the Spaniards from their island fortress in the bay of Algiers in 1529, and took Tunis in 1534. [When Khairaddin was about 50, he captured a young Italian noblewoman, Marie de Gaetano, and married her. Wolfe mentions also that the wife of one of the later Deys of Algiers was "an English renegade". Perhaps we can permit ourselves to imagine that not all such wives were unhappy captives, but that some of them enjoyed the adventure.] The emperor appointed him admiral of the entire Turkish fleet. The Ottomans had a treaty with France at the time, and Barbarossa appeared off the coast of Provence as an ally. But so powerful was he that he prohibited the ringing of church bells (an offensive sound in Islamic tradition) while his fleet was anchored in port. He died in bed in his palace at Constantinople, and was succeeded as beylerbey of Algiers by his son Hassan Barbarossa. A true pirate epic, rags to riches: the Renegadoes' dream. [Spencer, 1976: 18]

In the next generation the Renegado hero was Morat Reis, another Albanian, who made a name for himself by capturing a Sicilian duke and plundering a papal galley.

His most daring adventure, however, was to take a squadron of four galiots through the Straits of Sale, where he was joined by three pirate captains, and then on to the Canaries. The corsairs sacked Lanzarote, captured the wife and daughter of the governor and hundreds of people of lesser importance. After a cruise around the islands and several further landings for more booty and prisoners, they hoisted a flag for parley and allowed the ransom of their more important captives. The rest were carried back to Algiers or Sale as slaves. The Spanish, forewarned of the corsairs' return, tried to intercept them at the Straits, but Morat Reis successfully evaded Don Martin de Padilla's armada in a storm and brought his little flotilla into Algiers. It was a daring raid made more daring since the galiot was not really a suitable vessel for the Atlantic. Christians liked to believe that God punished Morat Reis by causing his son to die just before his return, but the story, told in the testimony about the raid made before the Inquisition, may not be completely correct. [Wolfe, 1979: 146-7]

Morat Reis seems to have inaugurated the special "Sale connection" in Algiers, which led to a unique scheme for the mutual benefit of both cities. When Algiers signed a peace treaty with some European nation—a frequent occurrence in the complex web of diplomatic back-stabbing around the Mediterranean basin—then Algiers agreed not to raid the shipping of that country—say, England. Meanwhile, let's say, Sale is temporarily at peace with France, and thus French ships are taboo for the "Sally Rovers". So...when an Algerian corsair approaches a French ship, it flies the flag of Sale, and thus arouses no suspicion. Having seized the French ship, it reverts to Algerian colors and returns to Algiers (where French prizes are permitted) to sell cargo and captives. And a ship from Sale can pull the same trick on a ship from England. Further ramifications can be imagined, especially as Algerian and Saletine ships could freely use each other's home port facilities for repairs, sale of booty, and R&R.

Ali Bicnin (a corruption of his name, Picenino) flourished in Algiers during the same period (1630's/60's) which also saw the establishment of the Bou Regreg Republic in Morocco, and which seems to have been the real golden age of the Barbary corsairs.

He was an Italian, some say a Venetian, named Piccinio, who arrived in Algiers in command of a pirate ship that he had sailed from the Adriatic; he converted to Islam and quickly rose to prominence in the *taiffe* through his daring and bravery. His prizes made him rich, and he reinvested in new corsair vessels until his own flotilla earned him the title of admiral of Algiers.

He owned two palaces in the city, a villa in the suburbs, several thousand slaves, jewels, plate, and great wealth in merchandise. He built a sumptuous public bath and a great mosque in Algiers as a gift to the city. He had his own bodyguard of footmen as well as cavalry, recruited mostly from the Koukou tribesmen whose sultan became his father-in-law. In the 1630's the redemptionist fathers writing from Algiers looked to him rather than the pasha as the real ruler of the city. Francis Knight, who was one of his slaves, called him a great "tyrant" who respected no man, not even the Grand Seigneur. However, not all his slaves regarded their lot as "exquisitely miserable" or their master as a tyrant. One story tells of a Mohammedan fanatic who, wishing to gain paradise by killing a Christian, begged Bitchnin for the privilege of killing one of his slaves. The corsair agreed but armed a muscular young man with a sword and then invited his petitioner to meet him in an orchard; when he fled, Ali Bitchnin laughed derisively at him. Another slave returned a diamond that he had "found"; Bitchnin remarked about the folly of not taking advantage of a chance for freedom!

Ali Bitchnin probably had ambitions to usurp control over the regency. His alliance with the sultan of Koukou, his bodyguard of hundreds of soldiers, his personal navy, his relations with the couloughli leaders all point to political ambitions. He suffered a serious reverse at Valona, where he lost eight galleys (Knight secured his freedom from him in that battle; he was a slave on board of one of the ships that was captured) and two thousand slaves. A few years later, when the sultan planned an assault on Malta, Ali Bitchnin refused to allow the Algerian naval forces to go unless the sultan would pay a subsidy in advance. The Sublime Porte sent a *chaouch* (messenger or emissary) to Algiers to secure Ali Bitchnin's head; both the chaouch and the pasha had to flee to a mosque to escape the wrath of the corsair admiral's followers. At that point, however, the pasha refused to pay the Janissaries' salary, and the corps demanded that Ali Bitchnin provide the money. Apparently, he had not yet prepared his men for a coup. He fled to his father-in-law's territory, and the Janissaries sacked his city homes as well as the Jewish quarter. What would happen next? The Sublime Porte obviously feared that Ali Bitchnin might return to Algiers with a Kabyle army; it sent him money, pardon, and honors just short of making him the pasha, but when he returned to Algiers with the sultan's chaouch, he soon sickened and died. His funeral was celebrated with near royal pomp, but many suspected that he had been poisoned on the sultan's orders.

[Wolfe, 1979: 1489][Ali Bichnin's mosque, built in 1622, was based on Ottoman models, with "an octagonal cupola set on a central arcaded square courtyard, with smaller octagonal cupolas serving as the roofs of the arcades." [Spencer, 1976: 77] Building a mosque is no proof of a sincere conversion, of course, but it does demonstrate that Ali Bichnin at least wished to appear pious.] Simon Danser, the "Old Dancer" or "Diablo" Reis, was the famous corsair who (according to legend, at least) first taught the North Africans to abandon their outmoded Mediterranean rowed galleys with lateen rigs and take up sailing in "round ships", i.e. European-style fore-and-aft rigged vessels (like the caravel, made famous by Columbus). Danser and his comrade Captain Ward (who will re-appear later) achieved enough fame to appear as characters in Thomas Dekker's play, *If This be not a Good Play, the Devil is in it* (1612) [Ewen, p. 3]. Originally a Dutchman from Dordrecht,

Danser came to Algiers from Marseilles, where he had established residence, married, and engaged in the ship-building trade. It is not clear what caused him to turn renegade and undertake a corsair career, but within three years of his arrival he had become the taiffe's leading reis and had acquired the sur name of Deli-Reis, "Captain Devil," for his audacious exploits. Using cap-

tured prizes as models, Danser taught his fellow captains the management and navigation of round ships equipped with high decks, banks of sails, and cannon. He personally accounted for forty prizes, which were incorporated into the corsair fleet, and from Danser's time onward the Algerians replenished their losses equally from captured ships and from their own shipyard.

Danser also led the Algerians farther afield than they had ever navigated before. They passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, penetrated the Atlantic, and ranged as far north as Iceland, where a corsair squadron swept the coast in 1616

Ironically, Danser, who seems to have retained his Christian faith at least in secret, utilized the capture of a Spanish ship carrying ten Jesuit priests off Valencia as a means of informing the French Court of Henri IV secretly of his intention to return to Marseilles, where he had left his wife and children. The French agreed on condition of the safe return of the Jesuits, which was done. In 1609 Danser was reunited with his family and restored to full citizenship by the Marseilles city council. But, once a corsair always a corsair, whether in the service of Christian France or Muslim Algiers, and in 1610 Danser presented to the king and the Marseilles councilors a bold proposal for an expedition against Algiers which- given his extraordinary inside knowledge of the city-would probably have overthrown the Regency government. Unfortunately, the French, distrustful of the loyalty of the former corsair, refused to entertain his project.“

[Spencer, pp. 125-6]

The Old Danser, however, was in fact the *causus belli* of a war between France and Algiers. It seems that

Danser, grateful for generous treatment by the French government, presented the Duc de Guise, the governor of the province, with two brass cannons, which, unfortunately for subsequent events, were on loan to him from the government of Algiers. Naturally the Algerians, shocked at Danser's "treason" demanded the return of the two cannons.

The political crisis moved slowly but surely. Guise refused to give up his cannons, but it was events in France, quite unconnected with Danser, that delayed action. Henry IV was murdered, the regent Marie de Medici had troubles to worry about both in the Rhineland and in Paris. Nothing was done. This was the sort of crisis that the Algerian reis were waiting for: French Mediterranean commerce was plentiful and rich and tempting, and with the refusal of the French king to grant redress, it was an excellent opportunity for the corsairs.

[Wolfe, 1979: 181-2] The cannons were eventually returned to Algiers-perhaps the worst humiliation ever suffered by France at the hands of its future colony.

We could go on digging up the names of many Algerian-based Renegadoes, and even the names of some of their ships and prizes, but we wouldn't learn very much more about their lives, much less their thoughts and feelings. Needless to say that some of them were Moslems, at best, in name only, and were despised by the pious for continuing to drink, curse, and "sing like Christians" even after their conversion. But what about that sailor from St. Tropez who caused a diplomatic incident because the French consul tried to prevent his turning Turk? What were *his* motives? And what about Ali Bicnin's mosque and bath house? The architecture of a cynical hypocrite?-or perhaps the sign of a more ambiguous emotion, half self-interest, half something else? True insincerity is-after all-rather rare in the history of the human heart. Most people tend to justify their choices and acts by some appeal to ideas and ideals-and first of all, to justify these acts to *themselves*. Ideologies are easily internalized when self-interest and self-image coincide with ideological rhetoric and goals. To assume that the Renegadoes were all Machiavellian schemers

and poseurs would be to give them too much credit. It's far more psychologically convincing to imagine that some of them, at least, came to "believe" in what they professed to believe.

The ambiguity of the Renegadoes was mirrored even in language. The medley of peoples in Algiers must have produced a polyglot nightmare of mistranslation. A lingua franca was needed, and indeed came to be known as *Franco*, the language of the "Franks" (and by extension of all European foreigners), or *Sabir* (from the Spanish "to know"). Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, Italian, and Provençal were mixed in this typical seaport argot. If a parallel dialect developed in Sale, it might have utilized Arabic, Berber, HispanoArabic (Morisco) and Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. "New" languages reflect new and unique large-scale social phenomena; they are not simply means of communication but also *patterns for thinking*, vehicles for the inner and outer experience of the speakers, for their new *communitas*, and their new (or newly-adopted) ideology. *Franco* died out with the corsairs, but its shadowy existence suggests that the Renegadoes had become-however tenuously-a "People", a linguistic community. Given the right historical circumstances, a lingua franca can become a full-fledged literary language, like Urdu or Bahasa Malay. *Franco* never made the grade-but knowing that it existed must change our view of the Renegadoes. We can no longer see them as a random scattering of lost apostates. A language (however crude and jury-rigged) is a culture, or at least the sure sign of an emerging culture.

# AN ALABASTER PALACE IN TUNISIA

Before we set sail at last for Sale we should make one more brief cruise of the Mediterranean in search of Renegadoes. It's incredibly frustrating not to have a genuine geography of one of these men (or women). In most cases all that survives of their memory is an anecdote or two, perhaps an exciting account of a battle at sea, which all reveal precisely nothing of the renegades' psychology, their thoughts, their motivations. But every once in a while a little flash of sulphurous insight lights up the gloom of mere speculation. For instance, the English Renegado Peter Eston,

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who started life as a Somerset farm laborer, commanded a fleet of forty vessels by 1611. In 1612 he raided the fishing fleet on the Newfoundland banks, as West Indian-based pirates were to do after him. Here he trimmed and repaired his vessels, appropriated such provisions and munitions as he needed, and took 100 men to join his fleet. He caused havoc wherever he appeared, whether this was in the western Mediterranean or off the coast of Ireland. Eventually tiring of the renegade life, he entered the service of the Duke of Savoy, purchased a Savoyard marquisate, and married a lady of noble birth.

[Lucie-Smith, 1978: 83]

At one time, Eston was told that James I of England had offered him a pardon. "Why should I obey a king's orders," he asked, "when I am a kind of king myself?" This quip reminds us of numerous speeches recorded in Defoe's *General History of the Pyrates* which hint at the existence of a pirate "ideology" (if that's not too grand a term), a kind of proto-individualist-anarchist attitude, however unphilosophical, which seems to have inspired the more intelligent and class-conscious buccaneers and corsairs. Defoe relates that a pirate named Captain Bellamy made this speech to the captain of a merchant vessel he had taken as a prize. The captain of the merchant vessel had just declined an invitation to join the pirates:

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I am sorry they won't let you have your sloop again, for I scorn to do any one a mischief, when it is not to my advantage; damn the sloop, we must sink her, and she might be of use to you. Though you are a sneaking puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security; for the cowardly whelps have not the courage otherwise to defend what they get by knavery; but damn ye altogether: damn them for a pack of crafty rascals, and you, who serve them, for a parcel of hen hearted numbskulls. They vilify us, the scoundrels do, when there is only this difference, they rob the poor under the cover of law, forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our own courage. Had you not better make then one of us, than sneak after these villains for employment?

When the captain replied that his conscience would not let him break the laws of God and man, the pirate Bellamy continued:

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You are a devilish conscience rascal, I am a free prince, and I have as much authority to make war on the whole world as he who has a hundred sail of ships at sea, and an army of 100,000

men in the field; and this my conscience tells me: but there is no arguing with such snivelling puppies, who allow superiors to kick them about deck at pleasure.

It's interesting to compare Eston, a "farm laborer" with the heart of a king, with Henry Mainwaring, the gentleman pirate who *did* accept an English pardon and (like Henry Morgan some years later) betrayed his former low companions. Or consider the only real aristocrat (as far as I know) to turn Turk, Sir Francis Verney:

A turbulent youth, Verney lost a quarrel with his stepmother about his inheritance, and in the autumn of 1608 left England in disgust. He arrived in Algiers and played a part in one of the frequent wars of succession, then turned corsair. In 1609 he was reported by the English ambassador in Spain to have taken "three or four Poole ships and one of Plymouth." In December 1610 he was said by the Venetian ambassador in Tunis to have apostatized. At this period he was an associate of John Ward. But his period of success did not last long. In 1615, according to Lithgow, he was desperately sick in Messina, after being a prisoner for two years in the Sicilian galleys. He had been redeemed upon his reconversion by an English Jesuit. Though he was now free, his fortunes were broken, and he was forced to enlist as a common soldier in order to exist. Lithgow discovered him when he was on the point of death, "in the extremist calamity of extreme miseries" and having lost all desire to live.

[Lucie-Smith, 1978: 84]

Four years later (1615) he died in the Hospital of St. Mary of Pity at Messina [Senior, 1976: 98]. Truly he "came to a bad end", as the old-time chroniclers always said of the pirates-whether it was true or not.

Another English renegado "gentleman" (from Cornwall) was Ambrose Sayer [ibid., p. 83]. In 1613 Sayer was captain of an Algerian vessel which was captured at Sale by an English ship, whose captain decided to send the corsairs back to London to stand trial. Toby Glanville, one of Sayer's shipmates, realized the "game was up, made several attempts to commit suicide and eventually succeeded in throwing himself off the stern of the ship." [ibid., p. 97] Presumably, like most sailors, he'd never learned to swim. Captain Sayer was sent home and convicted of piracy, but somehow managed to escape-and presumably to retire, since we hear no more of him.

Probably the corsair about whom we know the most was John Ward. Ward enjoyed the distinction of "starring" as the villain of that 1612 West End hit, *A Christian Turn'd Turke*; Ward also merited at least two penny-dreadful blackletter pamphlets and two popular ballads-the supermarket tabloids of the good old days-which may be full of errors and outright lies, though they paint an interesting picture. [For Ward, see Ewen, 1939]

Ward was born around 1553, "a poore fisher's brat" in Faversham, Kent. In the last year of Elizabeth's reign and the first of James, we find him penniless in Plymouth, apparently with a fairly extensive career in privateering behind him- fifty years old, "squat, bald, white-haired." [Norris, 1990: 63] In 1603 he had the extreme bad luck to be "drummed into service" in the Navy-i.e., impressed-and forced to serve aboard the *Lion's Whelp* under Captain Thomas Sockwell (who later became a pirate himself). As many historians have noted, low or non-existent pay, exhausting drudgery, and violent corporal punishments made up life in the Navy in those days, which was "one of the worst fates that could befall any man." [Senior, p. 87. Dr. Johnson remarks somewhere that any sensible person would prefer prison to the British Navy; one could be sure, at least, of better food and companions!] Ward is said to have lamented his salad days in privateering "when we might sing, drab [i.e., fuck], swear and kill men as freely as your cakemakers do

flies; when the whole sea was our empire where we robbed at will, and the world was our garden where we walked for sport." After just two weeks of naval discipline Ward reasserted himself and organized thirty other sailors to jump ship, steal a small bark in Plymouth harbor, [He'd been planning simply to rob the ship of its treasure, which belonged to an English Catholic recusant fleeing to Spain, but apparently he'd been misinformed and found "the goldfinches flown out of their nest"-so he stole the ship instead.] and sail out on the *Account*, free men at last. Aged 50, Ward embarked on a new and amazing career as a pirate.

Ward now sailed to southern Ireland, probably to Bearehaven or Baltimore, obscure and remote little ports known for their hospitality to pirates.[Six years later, in 1609, Ward and his comrade Captain Bishop visited Munster again at least once. Local officials had to be imprisoned for dealing with the pirates, who, after all, had 10 or 11 ships and about 1,000 men. Unable to repel them by force the English "Vice-President" of Munster tried to pardon them instead-but this expedient also failed. Later that year the British Lord Admiral sent a ship to Barbary under one Captain Pepwell to persuade Ward and his confederates "to forsake their wicked course of life." His mission not only failed, but all his sailors deserted him and joined Ward. Pepwell had to "part with his pinnace at an under rate to the Turks" and return to London looking foolish. Captain Bishop, who now claimed to despise Ward for turning Turk (in 1609), was bribed to murder him, but failed. Bishop pleaded for a pardon, saying supinely: "I will die a poor labourer in mine own country, if I may, rather than be the richest pirate in the world." [Ewen, 1939: 20-21] Ward obviously had other plans.]

Somewhere in the area he came across the *Violet* of London in November 1603 and captured her.

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When they reached the Scilly Isles the pirates had the good luck to fall in with a French vessel, but such was the strength of their ship that they could only hope to capture the Frenchmen by guile. Accordingly, the majority of the pirates hid below hatches while a few of their comrades up on deck engaged the other ship in conversation. They continued thus for several hours until their ruse finally succeeded and they came close enough to board and overpower their quarry.

[Senior, p. 88]

Ward renamed the ship *Little John*- which offers us a precious insight into his ideas and his image of himself: clearly he considered himself a kind of Robin Hood of the seas. We have some evidence that he gave to the poor, and he was clearly determined to steal from the rich.[In or about 1604, Ward arrived in Sale "to victuall and tryme his shippe haveing sould all their goodes"; there he joined with other pirates to raise and "disburse £100 to redeem a countryman" from captivity [Ewen, 1939: 3]. Ward used his own money to ransom captives on several other known occasions; perhaps this was his method of "giving to the poor"]

Ward now made one last clandestine visit to Plymouth where he recruited a crew to man his flagship, and then set out for the South-and the Orient-never to return.

On his voyage south, Ward took a 100-ton flyboat north of Lisbon and then entered the Straits. He sailed to Algiers, but received a hostile reception there because Richard Gifford, an English adventurer in the service of the Duke of Tuscany, had recently attempted to burn the galleys in the harbor. He therefore continued to cruise the Mediterranean, increasing in strength and wealth all the time. In December 1604 he was in the waters of Zante, where he captured the *Santa Afaria*, a Venetian vessel laden with currants and silk, and on Christmas Day that year he looted a Flemish ship of her cargo of pepper, wax, and indigo.

Disposing of his loot in various Mediterranean ports, Ward then passed through the Straits once more to trim and victual his ship. It was while he was at Sale, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, that he was joined by twenty-three more Englishmen. These men, who had set sail in the *Blessing* with Dutch letters of marque, were in a sorry state, having been roughly handled by a Spanish warship. When they saw that Ward and his fellows were “well shipped and full of monie,” they needed little encouragement to leave their ship and join forces with them. Ward's numbers were further augmented at Larache, when another English crew threw in their lot with him. The captain of these men, Michael, soon returned home to England, but their lieutenant, Anthony Johnson, remained with Ward and became one of his most trusted men.

By 1605 Ward had succeeded in gathering a formidable force around himself. His man-of-war, which he had appropriately named the *Gift*, was a flyboat of 200 tons or more, mounting thirty-two guns and crewed by about 100 men. In addition to the *Gift*, he was accompanied in his marauding by any prizes which he thought might suit his purpose. His men ; were mainly English, but included a considerable number of Dutchmen. There was certainly no shortage of able seamen who were anxious to join his band. Ward's pamphleteer, Andrew Barker, had an even higher estimate of the pirates' abilities, saying that many of them were “worthy spirits, whose resolutions, if they had beene aimed to honourable actions, either at sea or shore...might have beene preferred and commended for service to the greatest Prince living.”

In 1603, Ward had been a common seaman, living in poverty and serving in terrible conditions aboard one of the king's ships. At fifty years of age it must have seemed that his best years were over. Now less than two years later, he was a rich man, the commander of a fine, strong vessel, and the respected leader of a large band of desperate men.

Ward's piracies continued throughout the winter of 1605-6. In November 1605 he was in the waters off Cyprus where he robbed a ship from Messina of silk, velvet and damask to the tune of £5,500. At about this time he also took a French prize laden with spices, drugs, and cotton in the roadstead at Modone, and followed this in April 1606 by capturing a Flemish ship off Sardinia, carrying a cargo of textiles. Such captures can only have served to emphasize the pirates' growing need for a secure base of operations where they could sell their booty and store their riches. By 1606 they had found such a haven with the Turks at Tunis. In August of that year, Ward was reported to be living in the city and to have helped some English seamen who were temporarily in difficulties.

Ward's protector at Tunis was Cara Osman, who, as head of the Janissaries, had exercised absolute control over the city since 1594. An agreement was reached between the two men whereby Osman had first refusal of all goods which the pirates brought back to Tunis. The goods were then stored in Tunisian warehouses and resold to Christian merchants at a considerable profit. Everything points to the fact that Ward and Osman enjoyed a good working relationship and they may have even become close friends, for the pirate called the Turk “brother”. The suspicion is, however, that Osman got the best of the bargain. Yet the pirates were utterly dependent on Osman's friendship, for without it they would probably have been denied the use of Tunis as a base. Thomas Mitton, a man who had lived at Tunis for three years and been to sea with Ward, testified to this when he gave evidence in the admiralty court:

...the said Carosman is the onelie aider, asister and upholder of the saide Warde in his piracies and spoiles for that hee the saied Warde hathe noe other place to victualle in save onelie Tunis, and at Tunis hee coulde not victualle but by the meanes of Carosman whoe grauntethe him the



saied Warde warrantes to take upp and buy victualles at Tunis and the Cuntrie theereabouts. And the reason that moovethe the saied Carosman soe to doe is beecause when Warde takethe anie prize Carosman buyethe his goodes of him at his owne price

Ward's first voyage from his new-found base began in October 1606. Cara Osman paid one quarter of the costs of victualling the pirate ship, which was the *Gift*, Ward's old man-of-war. The crew was entirely English, except for twelve Turks put aboard by Osman, who paid for their own keep. Ward did not have to wait long for his first prize. On 1 November, near Corone, he captured the *John Baptist*, 90 tons, a vessel belonging to some London merchants which was employed in the local coasting trade. At this capture the *Gift* had as consort a fifty-ton pinnace commanded by Anthony Johnson, and it seems reasonable to assume that the two ships had set out from Tunis together.

The next prize to fall to the pirates was a far richer vessel, the *Rubi*, a Venetian argosy of upwards of 300 tons, which was returning from Alexandria with a cargo of spices and 3,000 pieces of gold. The *Gift*, flying a Dutch flag, sighted the *Rubi* on 28 January 1607, forty miles off the coast of the Morea, and Ward and his men, no doubt making full use of the element of surprise, captured her by boarding "verie suddeine, desperate and without feare." Ward followed this success by taking another Venetian vessel, the *Carminati*, which was homeward-bound after a voyage to Nauplion and Athens. Well pleased with the way the voyage had gone, Ward returned triumphantly to Tunis with his two Venetian prizes under guard.

As in the early years of the century, it was the Venetians who once again had to bear the brunt of English depredations. They were, however, yet to suffer their most sensational loss.

Ward fitted out his ships and put to sea again early in 1607. This time he was in the *Rubi*, his Venetian prize which he had converted to a man-of-war and manned with a crew of 140, mostly English. Once again Cara Osman had bought a quarter share in the venture by providing the pirates with guns, powder, match, and shot from the Turkish armoury. This time, however, there were no Turks on the expedition.

The event that shook the Republic of Venice, and so enriched the pirates, was the loss of the *Reneira e Soderina*, a 600-ton argosy. The great ship was taken as she lay becalmed near Cyprus by two pirate ships commanded by Ward, each said to be mounting forty guns and carrying at least 100 armed men. Amongst the fabulous cargo of the *Soderina* was indigo, silk, cinnamon and cotton worth at least £100,000 (one wildly exaggerated English report put her value at "two millions at the least"). It was not only the size of the financial loss which caused such a stir on the Rialto. The very manner of the *Soderina's* capture was a disgrace to the Republic of St. Mark. From one account of the baule, it is clear that the crew of the argosy were terrified by the ferocity of the pirates' attack and offered little or no resistance:

The captain, after deciding on the advice of everybody to fight, divided up all his crew and passengers, and stationed some on the quarterdeck, others on the maindeck and poop, and thus they all seemed to be very gallant soldiers with weapons in their hands. The two ships that came to attack, even though two or three shots were fired at them, strove without further ado to lay themselves alongside, and on coming within range fired off twelve shots, six each, always aiming at the crew and the sails, without firing once into the water. Their plans, designed to terrify, succeeded excellently, because two of those who were defending the quarterdeck were hit by one of their shots, and when they were wounded, indeed torn to pieces, all the rest fled, leaving all their weapons lying on the quarterdeck and all of them running to their own property,

even while the two vessels were coming alongside. For all his efforts, the captain was not only quite unable to force the crew to return to the quarterdeck, he could not even make them emerge from below decks or from the forecastle. Indeed, the ship's carpenter and some others confronted him with weapons in their hands and told him that he should no longer command the ship.

As if this prize were not enough, Ward proceeded to take another Venetian vessel before finally returning to his base. On a June day in 1607, he and his men dropped anchor at La Goleta, the port of Tunis, with booty worth at least 400,000 crowns. Ward did not want to prejudice his chances of getting a good price by landing the loot, and

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made many offers to carry away the shipp and goods to some other porte, because the said Carosman would not come to his price, and to that ende the said Warde rode out of command of the castle, and kepte his sayles at the yards untill they had concluded.

Eventually, Ward and Cara Osman agreed on a price of 70,000 crowns-little more than one-sixth of what the goods were actually worth.

Ward was now at the height of his success. An English seaman who saw him at Tunis in 1608 has left us a description of the arch-pirate:

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Very short with little hair, and that quite white, bald in front; swarthy face and beard. Speaks little, and almost always swearing. Drunk from morn till night. Most prodigal and plucky. Sleeps a great deal, and ot'ten on board when in port. The habits of a thorough "salt". A fool and an idiot out of his trade.

[Senior, 1976: 8893] Whatever his level of intelligence "out of his trade" Ward was now at the high point of success *his* the trade. He

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gathered round him a formidable group of pirates: Captain Sampson was appointed to the command of prizes, Richard Bishop of Yarmouth became Ward's first lieutenant and James Proctor of Southampton and John Smith of Plymouth his gunners. Though Danser still rivaled him in the western Mediterranean, Ward ruled the central seas. When asked if he would like to join the French as Danser had done, he replied, "I favor the French? I tell you if I should meet my own father at sea I would rob him and sell him when I had done." When a seaman called Richard Bromfield upbraided him for turning Turk and living in such a heathenish country, Ward merely called him "a Puritan knave and a Puritan rogue."

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Yet at this moment he opened negotiations for a royal pardon. One of his acquaintances deposed that he was offered L200 "in Barbary Gold" to take to friends in England in order to impress the Lord Admiral. The Venetian ambassador said that he was offered 30,000 crowns. But even James I jibbed at accepting bribes from such a notorious pirate and went so far as to name Ward specifically in a proclamation of January, 1609, for the apprehension of pirates. Ward seems to have been much annoyed at the rejection of his suit: "Tell those flat caps who have been the reason I was banished that before I have done with them I will make them sue for my pardon."

[Lloyd, 1981: 50-51]

As one of Ward's biographers put it, in a ballad called "The Famous Sea Fight between Captain Ward and the Rainbow," "Go tell the king of England, go tell him this from me / If he reign king of all the land, I will reign king at sea."

On one occasion in 1607, the well-known diplomat Sir Anthony Sherley “wrote to Ward at Tunis to dissuade him from his mode of life and sinful enterprises.” Ward was so incensed he granted freedom to a ship he'd just captured, on condition that the Captain find Sir Anthony and convey to him Ward's challenge to a duel. It's hard to reconcile Ward's reputation for slow-wittedness with such flamboyant gestures.

About Sept. last (1608) Ward, being in the Straits, met Fisher of Redriffe, bound for England, and gave him £100 to carry to his wife. Others of the company also sent money for wives and friends. Fisher abused his trust. On their next meeting Ward despoiled Fisher's ship, and being reviled, had Fisher ducked at the yard arm, and killed. The other men to avoid the like fate joined the pirates.

Ward having stabbed one West, a master's mate, his men mutinied. In a great storm in the straits under Saracota, Longeastle and others called him to prayers, but he refused, saying that “he neither feared God nor the devil.” [Ewen, 1939: 14. These quotes and anecdotes derive from one of the pamphlets about Ward, *Newwes from the Sea*.]

Ward now seems to have decided to remain in Barbary and give up all hope of a peaceful retirement. He

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fitted out the *Soderina* as his man-of-war and made preparations for his next voyage. She must have looked a fine ship indeed: 600 tons burden, mounting forty bronze pieces on the lower deck and twenty on the upper. He was at sea in her by December 1607, in command of an Anglo-Turkish crew of 400. However, the *Soderina* soon proved to be impractical as a warship. Her excessive armament weighed her down and her planks began to rot. As soon as Ward captured a prize he took command of her, leaving his cumbersome warship to her fate. The great vessel sank off Cerigo early in 1608 with the loss of almost all hands—250 Turks and 150 Englishmen.

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Yet this was just the start of a series of disasters that lay in store for Ward in the winter of 1607–8. First, the prize of which he had taken command was lost at sea, and then a galleon, which he had captured and fitted out at Navarino, was wrecked. Worse still, one of his leading captains, a Fleming named Jan Casten, was off Modone on 21 March 1608 with two men-of-war and a prize when he was surprised and defeated by the Venetian galleys. In this, one of their rare victories over the pirates, the Venetians killed 50 men, including Casten, and captured forty-four more.

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Ward still continued to serve in expeditions from Tunis after these setbacks. He sailed with two Turkish captains to the Levant in 1609 and went on further expeditions in 1610, 1612, and 1618. He even appears to have had a hand in the capture of a Venetian vessel in 1622, when he must have been nearly seventy years old. However, he developed other interests and stayed ashore more in his later years. He had soon become well-integrated into Tunisian society. By 1609 he had “turned Turk”, taking the name Issouf Reis, and he is known to have married another renegade, a woman from Palermo named Jessimina (despite the wife in England to whom he periodically sent money).

[Senior, 1976: 93-4]

In 1616 the gossiping Scots traveler William Lithgow met Ward at Tunis:

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“Here in Tunneis I met an English Captain, general Waird [such was Lithgow's Scottish pronunciation: Father Dan called him Edouart], once a great pirate and commander at sea; who in

despite of his denied acceptance in England, had turned Turk and built there a fair palace, beautified with rich marble and alabaster stones. With whom found domestics some fifteen circumcised English renegades, whose lives and countenances were both alike, even as desperate as disdainful. Yet old Waird their master was placable and joined me safely with a passing land conduct to Algier; yea, and diverse times in my ten days staying there I dined and supped with him, but lay aboard in the French ship." His legendary fame lived on because Edward Coxere, a captive at Tunis a few years later, says that Ward always "had a Turkish habit on, he was to drink water and no wine, and wore little irons under his Turk's shoes like horseshoes."

[Lloyd, 1981: 53]

As a popular ballad put it:

At Tunis in Barbary

Now he buildeth stately

A gallant palace and a royal place.

Decked with delights most trim,

Fitter for a Prince than him

The which at last will prove to his disgrace.

[Norris, 1990: 94]

Contrary to the balladeer's pious hope, Ward's architectural fancy failed to end in disgrace.

Lithgow also tells us that in his old age Ward had become interested in the problem of incubating poultry eggs in camel dung. One imagines him pottering about the alabaster palace with pots of this odiferous mulch, accompanied by curious chickens. The inevitable "bad end" which all pirates must suffer was provided by the plague, which paid one of its regular visits to North Africa in 1623. Aged about seventy, Ward died in bed and was buried at sea just as he'd always expected and hoped.

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Ward's contemporaries in England wasted a great deal of vitriolic language on him and other English renegades, whom they saw in an almost medieval light, as having forsaken Christianity to espouse Islam. Yet one cannot but sympathize with the pragmatism of the pirates against the dogmatism of their day. Certainly Ward waged war on Christian shipping, making no exception of English vessels, but stories that he would have robbed his own father if he met him at sea seem simply malicious. There was certainly another side to his nature. On at least two occasions he is known to have freed Englishmen who found themselves enslaved at Tunis, and Lithgow, who actually met the man, referred to him as "Generous Waird."

[Senior, p. 94]

C.M. Senior, the author of this epitaph, obviously cannot help a feeling of sympathy for Ward, despite his cruelty, bungling, and apostasy. The would-be Little John, the rather dimwitted old salt who no doubt continued to ramble on about the good old days over the dinner table, [Once in 1608, Ward sailed into Algiers with a Spanish prize laden with a cargo of "alligant wines", and there met another pirate (one John King of Limehouse) who'd just captured a ship carrying beer. Ward traded him a tun of wine for a tun of beer, losing money on the deal, and revealing his working-class taste! [Ewen, 1939: 9]] makes an odd fit with the Tunisian gentleman, sometimes abstemious, "generous", and-who knows?-perhaps even a little pious. (It's interesting to note that Ward only converted rather late in his Tunisian career, which suggests he may have done so entirely voluntarily and even sincerely.) This almost adds up to a convincing character study; it has almost enough contradictions and paradoxes in it to sound psychologically authentic. No other

Renegado comes across the gulf of time as such a fully-realized personality- with the possible exception of Murad Reis of Sale, whom we'll meet later on. Indeed, one can't help liking Ward- although, like William Lithgow, one might hesitate to spend a night at his alabaster palace, for fear of missing one's watch and wallet in the morning!

# THE MOORISH REPUBLIC OF SALE

The area around Sale appears to have been inhabited long before the emergence of *homo sapiens sapiens*. The Chalcolithic or “Pebble Culture” is well represented, and the Neanderthals were there. All levels of the Paleolithic are accounted for, and of course the Neolithic or “Atlantic Megalithic” [Brown, 1971]. The name Sale (Sala or Sla) may be exceedingly ancient, from the Berber word *asla*, meaning “rock”. The old necropolis of Sale, called Chellah (really the same name again), dates back at least to Carthaginian times (around 7th century BC). The Romans called the place Sala Colonia, part of their province of Mauritania Tingitane. Pliny the Elder mentions it (as a desert town infested with elephants!). The Vandals vandalized the area in the 5th century AD, and left behind a number of blonde, blue-eyed Berbers. The Arabs (7th century) kept the old name and believed it derived from Sala, son of Ham, son of Noah; they said that Sale was the first city ever built by Berbers.

Sale was apparently somewhat tardy in converting to Islam, and became known to Moslems as a “frontier town”; but by the 9th century it was certainly Islamic, and the frontier had become the ocean itself. In the 10th century, when the Ismaili Fatimid Caliphate of Cairo conquered the Far West, Sale apparently served as a military garrison: a fortress or *ribat*, built on the South bank of the Bou Regreg river across from Sale, became the settlement later known as Rabat. The military operations were directed against local Berber tribes who had adopted Kharijite doctrine (a kind of fundamentalism equally opposed to both Shusm and Sunni orthodoxy). By the 11th century, Sale had become an established city with essentially the same major features it still possesses. In order to understand subsequent events it's important to visualize the geographical and urban topography, hence this schematic diagram:

European commentators would later use the name Sale (Sallee or Sally) to refer to this entire complex, but in fact there are three distinct “cities” here, each of which will develop a separate and unique identity and fate: one, “Old” Sale (the present-day city of Sale). Two, the “Casbah” on the south side of the river, a little walled enclave unto itself. And three, “New” Sale (the basis for what would eventually be known as Rabat, the present-day capital of Morocco). In order to simplify matters we'll refer to these three settlements as *Sale*, the *Casbah*, and *Rabat*.

In the 11th century the first Spanish Moslems or “Andalusians” arrived in Sale from Cordoba, and brought with them their powerful and exquisite Moorish culture, architecture, music, spirituality, food, folkways, etc. At this point Sale took on its permanent sociological appearance—a port city where urban “Arab” Andalusian and rural Berber culture met, mingled, and mutated into *Moroccan* culture.

Under the Almoravids (1061-1164) and Almohads (1130-1269), Sale developed into an important nexus between trade with Europe and trade with Africa (the famous annual gold caravans), and became as well one of the recognized centers of Moorish culture, learning, piety, and sophistication. More Andalusians arrived, especially from Granada. Sale was already known as a place of refuge for the pious, a city of saints, marabouts, tombs, and shrines. Some of these saints will

play an active role in our history-even (or perhaps especially) after their deaths. Two types of spirituality are represented here, comparable to the “urban” Andalusian and “rural” Berber elements in the cultural mix. That is, some saints were orthodox, intensely pious, involved in the classical literate Sufism of the Shadhili Order; [Originally from Egypt, founded by Abul Hasan alShadhili in the 13th century, divided into numerous branches all over the Islamic world, but especially Egypt, North Africa and Yemen. See Douglas (1993); az-Zirr and Durkee (1991).] and others were more “maraboutic”, i.e., heterodox, folkish, miracle-working. Many of the important saints of Sale appeared around the 13th century during the “golden age” of the Marinid dynasty (1216-1645), when rich trade with Europe and relative peace and prosperity in the Maghrib and Spain led to a great flowering of culture and architecture. Sale's famous mosque and Madrasa (theological school), still considered among Morocco's most beautiful buildings, were built under the Marinids, as were a hospital, an aqueduct, a hospice for Sufis, and other public works.

An exiled Vizier from Granada, Lisan al-Din (the “Tongue of the Faith”) Ibn Khatib, visited Sale in the mid14th century and raved about its beauty, and the delights of its bazaars, including “the most delicate of Abyssinian slaves”; perhaps he was thinking of them when he wrote a verse that became Sale's unofficial motto:

Even distraction couldn't dispel grief  
from my heart  
but penetrated by the breeze of Sale  
it was salved.

[With a pun on Sala, the name of the city, and sala, Arabic for “console”. See Brown, 1971 34.]

Around the same time one of Sale's most important saints-of the learned and orthodox variety-settled in the city: Sidi Ahmad Ibn Ashir, “the doctor”, teacher of such famous Sufis as Ibn Abbad of Ronda, and also of a more maraboutic figure, a coral fisherman from Turkey known simply as “the Turk”, who became a sort of patron-saint of local sailors. Sidi Ahmad Ibn Ashir himself could bless the ocean and quiet storms, so that his tomb later became a popular pilgrimage for pirates.

After the death of Ibn Ashir in 1362, Sale and the Marinids began a long slow slide into decay-but it was a peaceful and still fairly prosperous decadance. Leo Africanus, who visited the city in the 16th century, left this description:

The houses are built in the style of the Ancients, much decorated with mosaics and marble columns. Moreover, all of the houses of worship are very beautiful and finely embellished. The same is true of the shops which are situated beneath large and beautiful arcades. In passing before some shops, one sees arches which have been built, it is said, to separate one craft from another.

I have come to the conclusion that Sale possesses all of the luxuries which distinguish a city of refined civilization, as well as being a good port frequented by Christian merchants of various nationalities.... For it serves as the port of the Kingdom of Fez.

Although Sale was quickly retaken [from the Castilian attack of 1260], it has since remained less populated and cared for. There are, especially near the ramparts, many empty houses with very beautiful columns and windows of marble and various colors. But the people of today do not appreciate them.

The gardens are numerous, as well as the plantations from which a large quantity of cotton is gathered. Most of the inhabitants of the city are weavers and they also make a considerable number of combs at Sale which are sent to be sold in all of the cities of the Kingdom of Fez; near the city is a forest full of Boxtree and other kinds of wood that are good for making these.

In any case, people live very comfortably today in Sale. There is a governor, a judge, and numerous other officials—those of the customs and the salt marshes—for many Genoese merchants come there and carry out important affairs. Their trade creates important revenues for the King. [quoted in Brown, 1971: 40-1]

The same period (late 15th-early 16th century) saw the emergence of Sale's official patron saint, Sidi Abdullah Ibn Hassun, who was-in a spiritual sense at least-deeply involved in the unfolding of Sale's subsequent and unique history. Sidi Abdullah represented an interesting mix of the learned and the maraboutic traditions. He was neither especially learned nor descended from the Prophet, [Sayyids or Sharifs-descendants of the Prophet- are of course honored everywhere in the Islamic world, especially by Shiites and Ismailis, but they've played a major role in Sunni Morocco as well. Great political prestige attaches to these families-one of them still rules Morocco today. This veneration of the Sharifs may owe something to Fatimid influence, which still survives in popular lore in the form of the famous "Hand of Fatima", used everywhere in North Africa as a charm against the Evil Eye. See Westermarck (1968) [1926]; see index under "Evil Eye", "Hand", etc.] but made his living writing talismans. On his entry into Sale he was followed by a walking palm tree which rooted itself on the site of his future mausoleum. The Sufis of the city were so ecstatic they changed into birds. And when the women of the city came to visit him he turned himself into a woman so he could receive them without scandal! The festival still held in his honor is celebrated on the eve of the Prophet's birthday (*Mawlid*), and is centered around a candlelight procession (based on Turkish custom) which the corsairs particularly enjoyed; they marched dressed in all their most colorful finery. Sidi Abdullah's most famous disciple was a marabout and holy warrior named Muhammad al-Ayyashi, who played a major role in the great era of the corsairs-which was now about to begin.

During the 15th and 16th centuries there was a dramatic change in the balance of power among the countries of the western Mediterranean. The fall of Muslim Granada in 1492 marked the end of over seven centuries of Moroccan expansion into and settlement in the Iberian Peninsula. Within a quarter of a century, all but one of the important maritime cities of the Moroccan Atlantic coast had fallen to the rising empires of Spain and Portugal. The exception was Sale.

Among the many people who came to Sale during this period was Mahammad alAyyashi (mentioned above as a disciple of Ibn Hassun) one of the most popular heroes of Moroccan history. Al-Ayyashi originated from the Banu Malik, one of the Hilali Arab tribes that had settled in the Gharb, the hinterland beyond Sale. Taking up residence in the city around the end of the 16th century, he is said to have devoted himself to a life of study and asceticism under the guidance of his shaykh Abd Allah b. Hassun and to have distinguished himself by piety, silence, continual fasting, and reading of the Quran. One day, according to the legend, Sidi Abd Allah was presented with a horse by a group of tribal leaders who had come to visit him. He called for his disciple alAyyashi and told him to mount the horse and to forego his education in order to discover, with the help of God, his well-being in this world and the one to come. The saint swore his disciple by an oath to carry out his duty, blessed him, and instructed him to ride to the city of Azemmour.

Within several years of this legendary episode, al-Ayyashi had become governor of Azemmour, defender of southern Morocco against the Spanish and the Portuguese, and a dangerous rival to the Saadian dynasty that had come to power during the first half of the 16th century. In 1614 al-Ayyashi narrowly escaped an assassination planned by the Saadian sultan and returned to Sale. From then until his death in 1641 at the hands of an Arab tribe of the Gharb, al-Ayyashi fought



the Spanish and Portuguese along the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and became independent ruler of the area north and east of Sale.

[Hesperis 45]

The people of Sale had always welcomed Moors from Spain into their community, both before and after 1492. In the first decade of the 17th century, a new type of immigrant began to appear. The last Moors of Spain, whether holdovers still adhering to Islam (*Mudejares*.1), or “*Moriscos*” (called “Andalusians” in Sale) nominally converted to Christianity, had been goaded by the racist and revanchist policies of Spain into a series of revolts and had been expelled en masse by Philip II in a series of edicts between 1609 and 1614. One of Sale's traditional historians [Hesperis, 47] tells us that when these new refugees showed up and tried to rent houses there, “because of their non-Muslim ways, Spanish dress, language, and manners, their lack of shame and dignity, they were not allowed” to stay. [The newcomers had alien-sounding names like Vargas, Pelafres Blanco, Rodriquez, Carasco, Santiago, Galan, Guzman, etc-ani many of them knew not a word of Arabic. [Caille, 1949 248]] In 1610 a group called the Hornacheros (from Hornachos in Estremadura) arrived together as a cohesive people, still fervent Moslems and speaking Arabic, and quite wealthy. Unfortunately it seems that their wealth had derived from bribing Christian officials to let them carry arms, from brigandage and from counterfeiting; the Hornacheros were not deemed sufficiently *comme il faut* to settle in Old Sale, city of saints and shrines. So they moved south across the river and built up the Casbah, and settled there instead. [The Casbah included the ruin of the old ribat or t'ort. Abun Nasr calls it an Almohad construction; it was built (or re-built) around 1150, along with the tower of Hassan, a minaret which served as a landmark for vessels at sea. [Coindreau, p. 30-31]]

The newly-arrived Moriscos however were even more outlandish-they spoke Hispano-Arabic or even Spanish, had Christian names and no wealth at all, and seemed even more vulgar than the Hornacheros. So the Moriscos had to content themselves with land below the Casbah (part of present-day Rabat), where they constituted a wholly separate group unto themselves. They thirsted for revenge against Spain and quickly became enthusiastic corsairs.

All three cities of the Bou Regreg were now inhabited- just at the point when the Marinids had finally collapsed altogether, letting the whole of Morocco slide into a state of turmoil, civil war, and dynastic jockeying. [As one Moroccan historian put it, the universal turmoil was “enough to whiten the hair of a suckling babe!” See Caille (1949: 209), quoting El-Oufrani.] Nominal rulers of the land were now the Saadians of Marrakesh, far to the South, and not very well-organized.

Meanwhile, the Marabout al-Ayyashi had been gaining a name for himself in the *jihād* against Spain and other Christian powers encroaching upon Morocco~ in fact, he is remembered to this day as a great hero of Moroccan nationalism. He had been set upon the path of holy war by his master Sidi Abdullah ibn Hassun, and had managed to make himself governor of Azemmour; he was highly unpopular both with the Europeans and with the Saadians of Marrakesh-who tried to have him assassinated in 1614, then sent an army against him.

He retreated back to Sale, where the leaders of all three cities agreed to protect him. Soon after (the date is uncertain), the Moriscos of Rabat declared themselves an independent republic, with a governor or “Grand Admiral” elected only for a very short term- a year at a time-and a divan or council of fourteen elders or advisors or captains. The Casbah followed suit in or around 1627 and created a Hornachero Republic. Both republics at first agreed to recognize al-Ayyashi's authority as “Commander in the Jihad” provided he respect their autonomy-but these good relations were not to last long.

Al-Ayyashi took up residence in Old Sale and built himself two forts just outside the city walls facing Rabat, with an underground tunnel (still extant) leading to his palace just inside the walls. The autocrats of the old city were his most enthusiastic supporters, and Sale now also declared itself independent under his spiritual/political authority. There were now three republics on the Bou Regreg-all engaged in Holy War-and piracy-and rebellion against the Saadians-and incessant quarrels with each other.

Around 1614, when the coastal city of Mamora fell to the Spaniards, a large number of international pirates fled to Sale and were welcomed by the Hornacheros and Andalusians. [In effect, Mamora had functioned as a pirate republic under the inspired leadership of Captain Henry Mainwaring. This Englishman apparently never converted to Islam, which suggests that turning Turke was still a voluntary act, and one which he chose not to perform, despite his strong connection with Barbary. He later crowned a hugely successful career by "taking the pardon" and retiring to England, where he wrote an important treatise on navigation and lived like a gentleman. He also wrote a treatise on how to suppress piracy-don't offer any pardons, Mainwaring advised.] They formed the nucleus of the Renegado community, and settled in Rabat-so actually the "Sallee Rovers" were Rabat rovers, although both settlements were commonly called Sale, and all three republics were involved in the corsair trade. Perhaps one might think of them as resembling three clans of Scottish Border Raiders, feuding incessantly with each other but teaming up for razzias on England. Sniping, quarreling, dissention, slurs on honor and other pastimes gave way to open civil war from time to time, especially between 1627 and 1641, but nothing was allowed to get in the way of business or impede the flow of booty.

This is a confusing situation, and the sources are also confused, but as far as I understand it, the situation was this: the Hornacheros financed piracy and built the fleet, and tended both to resent the old autocrats of Sale and to bully the lower-class Moriscos or Andalusians of Rabat. The Andalusians served as men-at-arms on corsair vessels, and sometimes as spies (since they could pass as Spaniards). In their city of Rabat lived the international corsair community and the European merchants and consuls (on the rue des Consuls, still extant), and presumably this is where most of the taverns and warehouses were to be found as well. [As Pere Dan describes it, day and night the noise of quarrels arose from the taverns and Moorish cafes, most of them owned by indigenous merchants "to whom the pirates sold their booty"; the corsairs at once spent their profits in "cabarets and other places of debauch, since their greatest passion was to waste on revelry the wealth they'd won at sea." [Coindreau, 1948: 41] Some feeling for the "scene" might be gained from descriptions of Port Royal, the later pirate town in Jamaica, which was so wicked that a flood swallowed it up like a watery Sodom. [Exquemelin, 1699]] The Andalusians were the least enthusiastic of all three groups about al-Ayyashi and the Holy War, despite their original acceptance of him on the basis of a shared hatred of Spain. They resented his authoritarianism, and probably his attempts to interfere in their republican politics. Finally in exasperation they refused to help him with any further crusades- whereupon he turned his holy wrath upon them, and opened fire on Rabat with his precious cannon (both iron and the far-superior bronze variety), mounted on the walls of his forts in Sale.

Old Sale concerned itself primarily with alAyyashi's yihat~ and the rebellign against the Saadians-but the Slawis were certainly not above involvement in corsair activity, whether as investors, captains, crews, men-at-arms, or merchants of booty, captives, and slaves. Nevertheless, \*'s ironic that Sale is remembered as the corsair city, when that romantic title belongs so much

more aptly to the Casbah/Rabat settlements across the river. To this day a rivalry between Sale and Rabat persists. As K. Brown puts it,

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The struggles of the 17th century became in time vague historical memories. The Slawis, who had considered the new intruders at Rabat as *an-Nasara 'l-Qashtaliyin* (the Christians of Castille), came to call them *l-Mslmin d-r-Rbat* (coll., the Muslims of Rabat), a slightly humorous, partly bitter allusion to their laxity in religious matters. The Rabatis, with a comparable irony, remember the madness of the people of Sale. They say about them: *kayihmaqu fi-l-asr* (coll.: They go mad at the time of the afternoon prayer). The Slawis remember, too. They say that in the days of alAyyashi, while the people of Rabat treated with the infidels during the day, the Slawis went about their work. At the time of the evening prayer, however, they took up arms to fight against the traitors of Rabat. But the two cities within a sackershoe one of another (following Admiral Rainsborough's phrase), became friendly enemies. They are called *al-aduwatayn* (the Two Banks) which, by the play of the Arabic root, reminds people of *al-aduwayn* (the Two Enemies). The mutual antipathy of the two populations becomes no more than bantering, and is expressed by both of them in a sagacious colloquial proverb: *wakha ywelli l-wed hlib war-rmel zbib maykunshi r-Rbati li-s-Slawi hbib* (Were the river [Bou Regreg] to become milk and the sand raisins, a Rabati will never be a friend to a Slawi). The friendly enemies across the river at Rabat were at the worst hostile brothers. For all that, they were Muslims and had assimilated to the Arabic culture of the country.

[Brown, 1971: 50-51] The initial quarrel between the Andalusians of Rabat and the Hornacheros of the Casbah centered on customs revenue, which the Hornacheros refused to share, saying they needed it all for defense and repair of the ramparts. The Andalusians remained unconvinced by these arguments, and by 1630 "the proud hosts of the Casbah and the disinherited inhabitants of the lower city were openly in a state of civil war." [Coindreau, 1948: 44] Old Sale sided with the Hornacheros, and ironically peace was restored only through the diplomatic intervention of the British consul, John Harrison, [Harrison must have been popular. Charles I had signed a treaty with Morocco, and this "gentleman of the chamber of the Prince of Wales" had arrived with gifts for Sale, including six cannon. For Harrison's story, see chapter 7 below. [Coindreau, 1948: 108.]] who in May 1630 drew up an agreement which ended hostilities. The three points of the agreement were:

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1st, the Andalusians would elect their own governor or *Caid*, but he would reside in the Casbah; [At this time the Hornacheros were led by Mohammed ibn Abd al-Qadir Ceron, and the Andalusians chose as Caid one Abdallah ibn Ali elCaceri; both of them remained active in one office or another during the Republican period [Caille, 1949: 2171 \_ although Caceri was assassinated in 1638.]

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2nd, the Divan would comprise 16 notables each from the Casbah and new Sale;

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3rd, revenues (including both maritime prizes and customs duties) would be equally divided between the Casbah and New Sale.

The two towns thus remained independent of each other and of Old Sale, but "in effect the Casbah became the central seat of the Moorish republic of Sale, and its government came to exer-

cise a more-or-less preponderant authority over the cities of the two banks [of the Bou Regreg].” [Coindreau, 1948: 44]

The new balance of power proved precarious, and in 1631 al-Ayyashi broke the peace again. The Andalusians had betrayed him by refusing to send him the scaling ladders he needed in his siege of Mamora. He asked the religious leaders of Old Sale for a *fatwa* or decision allowing him to repress the corsairs of New Sale and the Casbah, “for they have opposed Allah and his Prophet and aided the infidels and given them counsel...they manage to their liking the property of Muslims, depriving them of profit and monopolizing trade to their benefit.” [Brown, 1971: 49] Al-Ayyashi opened fire with his cannons and launched a siege against the South bank which lasted till 1632 and then fizzled out in October of that year.

Peace prevailed only a brief while, and in 1636 the Andalusians launched an attack against the Casbah which succeeded. Many Hornacheros fled the city, leaving the Moriscos in complete control. The victorious Andalusians now turned their wrath against Old Sale. They built a pontoon bridge over the Bou Regreg and initiated a siege of the city on the North bank. Al-Ayyashi, absent on the *jihād*, hurried back to defend his people.

Unfortunately for the Andalusians, the balance of power (which seemed to favor them) was now upset by the return of the English fleet, which had visited Sale the year before (under Lord Carteret, founder of New Jersey) to ransom English captives, and now reappeared, on April 3, 1637, under the command of Admiral Rainsborough. An interesting account of this expedition has been left to us by a former pirate serving under Rainsborough. [See Dunton, 1637; Carteret, 1638, published from MS in Philadelphia, 1929. Carteret himself later summed up his impression of Sale: "...[as] for the government, fundamentall lawes they have not any, for all that I could learne"! [Sources Inedites III, 1935: 453]]

The English decided to treat only with al-Ayyashi, whom they called (no doubt with typical British irony) “the Saint”. Perhaps the Marabout had refused to release English captives unless he received some help, but Rainsborough entered the fray with apparent enthusiasm, transferring some of his powerful up-to-date cannon from ship to shore, and beginning a bombardment of New Sale. The pontoons were sunk and the siege lifted. Al-Ayyashi, with British aid, effectively cut off all supply routes into the Casbah/ Rabat area, and burned the fields outside the city walls.

Rainsborough weighed anchor on August 30, 1637, but the Andalusians had had enough. They capitulated, agreed to repair the damage done to Old Sale, allow the Hornacheros to return, and go back to the 50/50 split of duties and booty.

At this point the Saadian Sultan of Morocco decided to get back in the act; he hired one of the Renegado captains, a Frenchman named Morat Reis (not to be confused with the Albanian/Algerian captain of that name mentioned above, nor with the Dutch Renegado Murad Reis, whom we'll meet later) to capture the Casbah in the Sultan's name. Now the Andalusians and the Hornacheros patched up their animosity and joined arms to expel the Sultan's men, who had reimposed the hated 10% tax, and in this effort they succeeded. But again the peace proved short-lived; within months alAyyashi had again decided to try wiping out the “*gens sans foi ni loi*” of Rabat. This time, the embattled Moors and Corsairs decided they needed an ally. Al-Ayyashi was a Sufi, so they looked for help to a rival Sufi-one Mohammed alHajj ibn Abu Bakr al-Dala'i.

Muhammad al-Hajj's grandfather had been a great saint of the Middle Atlas region, where he established an important 13ufi center and converted the local Berber tribes into a huge confraternity-the Dala'iyya. He taught the Jazuli/ Shadhili way of Sufism, centered on veneration of the Prophet, and an extensive program of public works and charity. Basically apolitical,

the grandfather was succeeded by a son, who kept up cordial relations both with al-Ayyashi *and* with the Saadian Sultans (surely a proof of his diplomacy, if not his sanctity!)-but *his* son M. al-Hajj had political ambitions which began to sour the family's reputation for neutrality. Eventually M. al-Hajj succeeded his father as third head of the Order (1636) and began reorganizing it- as an army. [For this account, see Nasr, pp. 216-221]

In 1638 the Saadian Sultan sent his own army from Marrakesh to the Middle Atlas in an attempt to curb alHajj's growing ambitions, but the Saadians were completely routed by al-Hajj's Berber troops and fled South again leaving him in control of the whole area. He now decided his new *royaume* needed a seaport, and turned his holy gaze on Sala. Coincidentally just at that moment came the desperate appeal of the Andalusians, once again besieged in Rabat by "the Saint" al-Ayyashi.

Muhammad al-Hajj saw in al-Ayyashi an impediment in his gaining control of Sala, his natural outlet on the ocean. Al'Ayyashi's persecution of the Andalusians was therefore used as the pretext for fighting him. In 1640 the Dala'iyya army occupied Meknes, which was within al'Ayyashi's zone of influence. Then after a protracted conflict between al'Ayyashi's predominantly Arabian army and the Dala'iyya Berbers, the outcome was decided in an engagement on the Sibu river in April 1641. Al-Ayyashi was killed, and his followers were dispersed...

Al-Ayyashi's defeat enabled the Dala'iyya to occupy Sala.

...in Sala for ten years after its occupation, the Dala'iyya chief (or sultan as he became called) preserved the Andalusians' autonomy. They knew better how to deal with Europeans, and indirect contacts with the Christians did not unduly compromise the chief's religious standing, while securing the merchandise he needed, especially arms.

In the ten years (1641-51) when the Andalusians controlled Sala under nominal Dala'iyya rule, European agents, sent mostly to deal with questions arising from piracy or connected with commerce, dealt directly with them. From 1643 there was a Dutch consul in Sala, and in 1648 the French government appointed a substantive consul to reside there, after having been satisfied since 1629 with having a merchant living in Marseilles act as consul while having an agent in Sala. In 1651 Muhammad al-Hajj appointed his son 'Abdulla as governor of Sala. As 'Abdulla also acted as the superintendent of the Dala'iyya state's foreign affairs, his appointment suggests that relations of the Dala'iyya with Europe had become sufficiently important for them to be entrusted to a member of the ruling family. But the Andalusians continued to influence the conduct of foreign relations by acting as interpreters and secretaries, drafting 'Abdulla's letters to foreign rulers and advising him on the treaties he negotiated with some of them.

The most intimate of the Dala'iyya foreign relations was with the Dutch. Lengthy negotiations between 'Abdulla and the Dutch over the provisions of a treaty signed in 1651, and revised in 1655 and 1659, suggest that the Dutch conducted an active trade with Morocco in the 1650's. A recurring problem in these negotiations arose from the dual character of Sala as a centre of trade and a base for piracy. The Dutch were ready to recognize the right of the Sala corsairs to attack the ships of their common Christian enemies, the Spaniards, while obtaining the promise that their own ships would not be molested. At the same time they were opposed to the friendly relations which the Sala pirates and the Dala'iyya chiefs maintained with the rulers of Algiers.

The Algerine pirates were given facilities in Sala, and were allowed to sell their captured goods in it. The attempt by the Dutch to include in their treaty a provision barring the Andalusians from cooperating with the Algerine pirates and trading with Algiers often led to a deadlock in the negotiations. It is a revealing indication of the volume of Dutch trade with Morocco in this period that the Dutch attitude mellowed whenever the governor of Sala threatened to raise the duties on exports and imports beyond the customary ten per cent. [Nasr, pp. 221-2]

The Bou Regreg Republic may have lost some autonomy under the regime of the Dala'iyya, but perhaps gained- at last- some peace and balance under the nominal Jaltanat of the Sufi order. In any case, the last two decades of the Triple Republic were its most golden, at least in terms of piracy. Freed at last of internecine strife, all three city-states could turn all their hostility outward-in the corsair holy war. Moreover, if the corsair republics in their purest form (1614-1640) were unique as political entities, one can only use a pleonasm like "/ItOLY unique" to describe the condominium-regime of corsairs and Sufis, which lasted from 1640 to 1660. It boggles the imagination-and indeed it was too good to last long. The hand of the Dala'iyya and its chief in Sale-Sidi Abdullah the "prince of Sale"- came to feel heavier and heavier to the Andalusians and pirates. They began to look for some means to restore their pristine state of total independence, which by now had come to take on all the aura of an ancient and revered tradition.

Meanwhile...a disciple of the martyred marabout alAyyashi, an Arab from Larache (and therefore an enemy of the Dala'iyya Berbers, those "shirtless animals" as one Islamic historian called them; "beasts unrestrained save by drunkenness or terror," as another put it-with the typical prejudice of urban Arabs), rose up in arms and founded a kingdom of his own in the North. [Coindreau, p. 47; Caille, p. 222] This man, named Ghailan, looked like a potential savior to the Andalusians of Rabat. They staged an uprising, and besieged "Prince" Abdullah in the Casbah. The Dala'iyya master M. al-Hajj sent an army to relieve his son, but the army was defeated by Ghailan in June 1660. Abdullah however held on gamely in the Casbah for another year, helped by a shipment of supplies sent by the English governor of Tangiers. At last, in June 1661, he ran out of food and had to surrender the castle.

By this time the Andalusians had come to distrust Ghailan as much as they'd disliked the Dala'iyya- more, in truth. Despite the fact that they'd just run the Dala'iyya out of town, they decided to profess renewed loyalty to the regime in order to stave off Ghailan, lest he prove a worse master. For four years they played hard-to-get, but finally in 1664 capitulated to Ghailan and agreed to pay him the dreaded 10 percent.

Finally, in 1668, the last vestiges of Sale's freedom were wiped out by the rise of the Alawite Dynasty under its Sultan Moulay Raschid, who succeeded in reuniting the whole country for the first time since 1603. The Alawite Sultan had no intention of putting an end to the highly profitable holy war of the Bou Regreg against Europe, and promised the corsairs his protection. Thus, although the Republic had vanished, piracy survived-for a while. Unfortunately the Alawites had huge appetites, and little by little increased the "bite" from 10% to well over half. Eventually the corsairs realized that decent profits were no longer possible. The Moorish pirates stayed on to become captains in the Sultan's "Navy", and perhaps some of the Renegadoes did the same. Others, perhaps, were tempted to move on, to the Carribean, or to Madagascar, where the pirate scene now began to flourish. The later history of Sale does not concern us, nor the later history of Barbary in general. With the passing of the Republic we lose sight of our Renegadoes-and so, in the next sections, we will return to the heyday (1614-1660) of the Republic, and try to study

the Renegadoes themselves, and then the *daily life* of the converts-now that we've looked at their political/military history.

# MURAD REIS AND THE SACK OF BALTIMORE

“We shall have a bon voyage.”

-Murad Reis

Much as we might like to meet a whole crew of Sallee Rovers, people with names, dates, biographies we could study, “cases” we could analyze in order to better understand the Renegado character and fate, sadly no such survey will be possible. If we know little about the converts of Algiers and Tunis, we know even less about those of Sale. I’ve wondered why this should be so, and can only suggest that Sale must have been considered (by European travellers and chroniclers at least) more a backwater than Algiers and Tunis, perhaps harder to get to, and perhaps even more of a dangerous hell-hole. Even good Pere Dan, who gives us a brief chapter on Sale, apparently never visited the place but described it on the basis of hearsay; and the few first-hand accounts are uninformative. In any case *writers* about Sale- i.e., literate Europeans- had little curiosity about the Renegadoes, whom they despised and feared, and represented in the most sensationalistic manner possible. Meanwhile, those who could tell us something interesting- the converts themselves- were not *writers*. All categories in which we might discuss the corsairs have been predetermined by outside hostility and propaganda. This is the fate of the revisionist historian attempting to investigate the culture- or the politics of resistance- of a long vanished non-literate community. Recently, of course, the revisionists themselves have developed (or resurrected) some categories of their own. Marxist or Marxizing historians of “social banditry” and millennialism, like Hobsbawm and Cohn, provide some useful methodology, while writers of a more libertarian-leftist slant (like Hill, Lemisch, Linebaugh, and Rediker) have actually created a whole new historiography of maritime radicalism. But none of them has discussed the Renegadoes. As far as I know, no comparable school of thought has arisen amongst Moroccan or Algerian or Tunisian historians, who might have access to untapped documentary resources (assuming such exist); orientalist have ignored the issue, whether out of their own innate cultural conservatism or because no texts can be found; and so the field has been left to us amateur piratologists, *faute de mieux*.

Coindreau (1948: 80-84) has scraped together a brief list of Sallee Rovers from archives and unedited source material in European collections. Thus we have *El hajj Ali* probably a Moor, who, on October 14, 1624, off Cape Finistere, captured a Dutch ship under one Captain Euwout Henriexz, during a period when Sale was supposed to be at peace with Holland and therefore ceased to molest its shipping. Hajj Ali demanded that the captain declare himself to be French- and thus a legitimate prize- or else be thrown overboard.

*Rais Chafer* (Ja’far), an English renegade (mentioned in 1630), *Hassan Ibrahim* (probably native, 1636), and *Maime Rais*, a Dutch renegade (1636). This last, commanding a ship of 200 tons with 13 cannon, captured an English ship and was on his way back to Sale when he himself was taken.



*Chaban Rais* Portuguese renegade, in 1646 commanded an Algerian ship, *The Crabbe* (16 cannon and a crew of 175), stopped in Sale to take on stores and arms. At sea for three months, he'd seized nothing better than an English cargo of salt and one fishing boat in the Gulf of Gascony, when (on July 22) he was himself taken by the Dutch pirate Cornelis Verbeek.

*Ahmed el-Cortobi* a Spanish renegade (or Morisco?) from Cordoba, was a "fat man." On October 6, 1658, commanding the Saletine ship *The Sull* he met with a Dutch *Qeet* off Cape Finistere. Again Holland and Sale were supposed to be at peace, and Ahmed Rais decided to pay a friendly visit to the flagship. After returning to his own ship, he watched in horror as one of the Dutch vessels, *The Prophet Daniel* of Lubeck under Captain Pieter Noel, suddenly attacked him. Several corsairs were killed, and the rest-including Ahmed-taken prisoner. The Dutchman then looted *The Sun*, set fire to her, and sank her. This singular event caused a great diplomatic scandal to erupt. Sale demanded recompense, and the Dutch (anxious to preserve the peace) took the affair quite seriously. In January 1659 the Admiralty fined the captain of *The Prophet Daniel* 9,500 florins, and handed over to Sale a vessel equal in tonnage and armament to the sunken *Sun*, while *The Prophet Daniel* itself was awarded to Ahmed el-Cortobi. [Coindreau, 1948: 187]

*Ali Campos* (Spain), *Case Mareys* (England), and *Courtebey* (the son of Ahmed al-Cortobi, who must have been as "short" as his father was "fat"-unless his name is simply a corruption of Cortobi) are a few more names to add to our list; and Venetia an Italian renegade, famous for his audacity and courage. This fairly exhausts the roster of Renegadoes from the Republican period of Rabat-Sale-with one major exception.

*Murad Rais* (a.k.a. Morat, John Barber, Captain John, Caid Morato), the most famous of all Sallee Rovers, was born as Jan Jansz in Haarlem, Holland, day and year unknown.

Jan Jansz began his career, as did most of the Dutch seafaring men who ultimately turned pirates, as a privateer of the States against the Spaniards during the War of Liberation. But this quasi-lawful type of warfare yielded more glory than profit, and Jansz presently trespassed on his commission and found his way to the Barbary coast. There he waged war on the ships of all Christian nations alike, those of Holland not excepted, save that when he attacked a Spaniard he flew the standard of the Prince of Orange as a tribute of sentiment to his origin. When occupied against any other nation's shipping he flew the red half-moon of the Turks.

[Gosse, 54 5][Coindreau identifies this flag as the 3 gold crescent moons on a red ground often flown by Ottoman privateers and corsairs, but It might also refer to the flag of Sale, showing a gold Man in the Moon on a red ground.] Captured at Lanzarote in 1618 by Barbary Corsairs, Jansz apostasized at Algiers-and although the conversion may have been forced, it seems to have taken root, for Murad never begged a pardon or gave the least sign of wishing to return to Christendom. He took up his trade under the leadership of the great Algerian corsair Sulayman Rais (who may also have been Dutch) who died however next year in 1619. Murad provides us with a perfect example of the links between Algiers and Sale, since he now began to move back and forth between them like a man with dual citizenship.

Gosse has this to say about Murad:

At first he sailed as mate to a famous corsair called Suleiman Reis, of Algiers, but after his chief's death in 1619 settled at Sallee. The port ("its name stunk in all Christendom") was extremely well situated for the new form of piracy, being on the coast of the Atlantic, only fifty miles from Gibraltar, where the corsairs could lie in ambush for everything that passed through the Straits and dash out quickly to meet the East India and Guinea traders. The Sallee fleet was

not large, about eighteen all told, and the individual vessels were small, since a bar in the harbour prevented ships of deep draught entering unless they were first unloaded. The port was nominally subject to the Emperor of Morocco, but shortly after Jansz's arrival the Sallentines declared themselves independent and established what was in effect a pirate republic, governed by fourteen of themselves, with a president who was also the Admiral. The Dutchman was the first to be elected, and to show his adopted countrymen how thoroughly he had become one of themselves he married a Moorish woman, though he had left a wife and family at Haarlem.

[Gosse, p. 55]

Other sources say that Murad was appointed Governor of Sale by the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Zaydan in 1624, but this misunderstanding probably arises from the fact that the Sultan, wishing to preserve at least the outward show of sovereignty, merely approved the *fait accompli* of Murad's election. We can assume that Murad was a man of charisma and genuine talent as a leader, and that he had the quality prized by pirates above all others-Itzck. We can assume that he was an enthusiast for the corsair republic, and perhaps its chief ideologue as well as its first elected Admiral. We might even go so far as to assume that a person of such obvious intelligence and courage may have attained a certain degree of political consciousness and revolutionary fervor.

Business prospered under Jansz's efficient administration and he was soon compelled to find an assistant, a post for which he selected a fellow countryman, Mathys van Bostel Oosterlinck. The Vice-Admiral celebrated his appointment by following his superior's example, turning Mohammedan and marrying a Spanish girl of fourteen, although he had a wife and small daughter in Amsterdam.

Jansz, what with prizes taken at sea and his perquisites as Admiral, which included all dues for anchorage, pilotage and other harbor revenues, as well as brokerage on stolen goods, soon became an enormously rich man. Nevertheless he occasionally found the routine of business irksome, the pirate in him asserted itself and he went off on a cruise. During one of these, in November 1622, when he was trying his luck in the English Channel, he ran out of provisions and was forced to put in at the port of Veere in Holland to replenish his stock. It seemed a risky undertaking, but the Admiral of Sallee was a subject of the Emperor of Morocco, who had lately made a treaty with the States of Holland; hence Jan could legally claim the privileges of the port, though the welcome he received was a cold one.

The first visitor to come on board was the Dutch Mrs. Jansz, accompanied by all the little Janszes. "His wife and all his children," a contemporary writer records, "came on board to bid him leave the ship; the parents of the crew did the same but they could not succeed in bringing them to do this as they (the Dutch renegade crew) were too much bitten of the Spaniards and too much hankering after booty." Not only did his crew remain, but it was swelled by recruits, despite a stern order by the magistrates that no one was to take service on the vessel. But times were hard in Holland as a result of nearly half a century of war with Spain; the youth of Veere were more tempted by the opportunity of collecting an easy livelihood while getting in a blow at their old enemy than afraid of magisterial displeasure. Jan left Veere with a great many more hands on board than when he entered it.

A few years later, in mid winter, Jansz called at Holland again, this time having barely escaped disaster. Off the coast he had met a big ship flying Dutch colors. Jan, momentarily forgetful of treaties, was "at once enamoured of the fine ship and tried to take her"-it was quite probable that after he had succeeded, the lawyers would again enable him to claim the advantage of the treaty. But the affair turned out quite differently: as he came alongside the vessel the Dutch flag

was hauled down, the standard of Spain run up in its place and in a moment Spanish troops were swarming on to his deck. The pirates, outclassed, just managed to escape after a bitter fight, many of the crew being killed and wounded. They were glad to get safe into the harbour of Amsterdam. Jan applied to the authorities for assistance for his sick and wounded but was flatly refused. The unfortunate corsair had meant to violate the treaty, had failed and been punished, and was now receiving further punishment by having its benefits denied him just as if he had succeeded. He was not even granted permission to bury his dead, so the corpses had to be pushed beneath the ice as the only means of disposing of them.

After several comparatively bad years in the Straits of Gibraltar, Jan decided to try his luck where no pirate, Barbary or other, had ever before ventured. In 1627 he engaged as pilot a Danish slave who claimed to have been to Iceland, and instructed him to lead the way to that remote island. Jansz's three ships contained, besides Moors, three English renegades.

The voyage was a daring feat of navigation for the time but the results were not commensurate with the risk. They plundered Reykjavik, the capital, but only obtained some salted fish and a few hides. To make up for their disappointment they caught and brought back four hundred- some say eight- Icelanders: men, women and children.

[Gosse, pp. 55-7]

By 1627 the political situation in Sale had grown a bit warm. The Hornacheros declared their own Republic in the Casbah that year, and al-Ayyashi was actively establishing himself in Old Sale. Murad's Admiralship, which had kept him from sea, may have ended awkwardly; in any case, after his return from Iceland he moved with his Moorish family back to Algiers, and at once resumed the active Corsair life. In 1631 he organized another great adventure, his sacking of the town of Baltimore, County Cork, Ireland.

The real and still unanswered question about the sack of Baltimore is not "how?" Although Murad's seamanship was obviously superb, he was by no means a pioneer in this case, as with Iceland. "Little John" Ward had visited Ireland several times and we can be sure he wasn't the only corsair to follow that route. [In fact, as B. Quinn points out in his wonderful book *Atlantean: Ireland's North African and Maritime Heritage*, the raid on Baltimore may be viewed as the last episode of a history stretching back into Neolithic and even Megalithic times. It's interesting to note that the pre-Celtic tribes of Munster were called the Hibernii, assumed to be a branch of the Iberii from Spain; the syllable BER is only one reason (Quinn offers many more) to believe that both peoples were related to the Berbers of North Africa. This opens up a vast and unplowed field for research and speculation on Irish-Moroccan connections, which Quinn has only begun to cultivate. See also Ali and Ali (no date) for an "Afrocentric" treatment of the same theme.]

The real question about the sack of Baltimore is "why?" And for once in our studies, the mists of lost history seem to clear-just a bit-offering us some glimpses of possible motives.

In the first place, Southern and Western Ireland was at this time nearly as infested with pirates as the Barbary Coast. The famous woman pirate Grace O'Malley ruled her own little kingdom in Mayo during the time of Elizabeth, and in fact had paid that ruler a kind of state visit, queen-to-queen, in 1593. [Chambers, 1979. Elizabeth and Grace got on very well-kindred spirits, no doubt.] As for County Cork, we learn (from a rather rare book, *Pirate Harbours and their Secrets* by B. Fuller and R. Leslie-Melville):

Sir William Herbert, the Vice President of Munster, summed up the state of the province in 1589 in these words: "If piracies be there maintained, and every port and haven in those parts be made acceptable for them, we must give over our inhabitation there, since we shall pass neither

our commodities or ourselves over the seas, but at their mercy. The province generally is made a receptacle of pirates. They are too much favoured in Kerry. Sir Edward Denny has received Gascon wine which was robbed from Frenchmen, and Lany Denny has received goods which were taken from 'Brittaines.' One Captain Maris, oi Youghal, a known negotiator in these kinds of affairs, is shortly to remove to Tawlaght, a castle of Sir Edward Denny's, near Tralee, there to exercise that trade." Denny, later created Earl of Norwich, also had seats in Cornwall, and was therefore a neighbour to the Killigrews. He, in fact, did for the pirates in Ireland what the Killigrews and Sir John Perrot did for them in Cornwall and South Wales. When influential noblemen acted as "fences" piracy was certainly a paying game... As the Royal Navy was practically non-existent until the latter half of the century, when James II placed it on a sound basis, it was virtually impossible "to eye and awe the inhabitants from traffic with these caterpillars," to use the picturesque words of Lord Danvers.

The extent to which the pirates held the upper hand may be judged from the fact that early in 1609 Danvers himself was blockaded in Cork by four sail of pirates carrying some three hundred men. The Lord-President could not raise even one ship strong enough to defy the marauders, and so in Cork he had to stay, while the unwelcome visitors sailed up and down the coast seeking sustenance. So as to prevent them re-victualling in Co. Kerry, the supplies of corn which were usually exported from Co. Cork were held up, but this seems to have annoyed the inhabitants far more than the pirates.

Later in the year an even greater force of pirates, numbering eleven ships and 1,000 men, assembled off the coast. [This was Captain Ward and his fleet from Tunis.] Sir Richard Moryson, then the Elce-President of Munster, was powerless to take action against them, and had to fall back on the old and obviously unsatisfactory method of pardoning them. "The continual repair of the pirates to the western coast of the province," he told Lord Salisbury, "in consequence of the remoteness of the place, the wildness of the people, and their own strength and wealth, both to command and entice relief, is very difficult for us to prevent or remedy."

Such was the position of affairs when Berehaven first attracted the angry attention of the English Government. This was in the days of Donnell O'Sullivan Beare. As a haven the spot was and still is ideal. In proof of this it is necessary to say no more than that it is one of the naval bases retained by Great Britain under the Treaty of 1921. It is really a haven within a haven, for it lies far into Bantry Bay, which itself is famous as one of the world's finest natural harbours as well as a very beautiful one.

Even in the middle of the eighteenth century it could be said that Bantry Bay was large enough to hold all the shipping in Europe, and the statement was by no means absurd, for the Bay is about twenty-one miles long and averages three miles in width. Moreover, it is deep. Berehaven is formed by Bere Island, a humpbacked strip of land about seven miles long and one-and-a-half wide, which lies off the northern shore of Bantry Bay. Seen from the head of the Bay, that is to say from its eastern end, the island bears a striking resemblance to a basking crocodile. Lying as it does roughly parallel to the mainland, and almost joining it at its seaward end, the island affords shipping a perfect haven of refuge when Bantry Bay itself is lashed into fury.

Donnell O'Sullivan's chief stronghold was Dunboy Castle, on the mainland and commanding the narrow seaward entrance to the haven. He was a wild sea-rover, bold in the knowledge of the strength of his lair and in the backing of the powerful O'Sullivan clan to which the district belonged. Even to-day at least seventy-five percent of the inhabitants of Castletown Bere, the remote little town on the mainland opposite the island, are O'Sullivans. Here came pirates great

and small, and a merry trade they ran, for Berehaven had a rival for their favours, the neighbouring harbour of Baltimore known also by the picturesque name of Dunashad, or the Fort of the Jewels. Dunashad Haven is a sheltered bay “where infinite number of ships may ride, having small tides, deep water, and a good place to careen ships,” to quote Sir Thomas Stafford.

The haven is formed by Sherkin Island, which acts as a natural breakwater. Further out to sea is Clear Island, the nearest land to the Fasnet Rock Lighthouse, whose powerful beam has cheered many a transatlantic traveller. This well-sheltered lair and the surrounding district, then the largest barony in Ireland, was run by the O'Driscolls who, perhaps, deserve to be remembered as the most notable clan of Irish sea-rovers. Rich pickings were to be had from the pirates who came running before favourable winds with prizes snatched from the hands of the hated English. And so it is to be supposed that little affection existed between the O'Sullivans and the O'Driscolls. It cannot be doubted that the pirates were well aware of this fact and made excellent capital from their knowledge.

Thus Berehaven and Baltimore were not pirate lairs in the sense that they were owned by self-confessed sea-robbers who used them as an essential base for their operations. They were useful stations into which any pirate could sail to secure a long price for his cargoes or retreat for protection if hard pressed. At the same time, there is no doubt that the owners of both harbours did a certain amount of pirating on their own accounts and that they were not foolishly particular in the matter of infringing each other's interests, or the interests of any other Irishmen. There was, for instance, the occasion when Sir Fineen O'Driscoll-Sir Fineen of the Ships, as he was known- burnt his fingers badly over a cargo of rich wine.

One stormy February day this worthy, in company with his bastard son, Gilly Duff, nicknamed the Black Boy, saw a ship beating about helplessly at the entrance to Baltimore Bay. Jumping into a boat the thoughtful pair offered to pilot the stranger, much to the relief of the harassed sailors. She was a Portuguese vessel laden with one hundred tuns of wine consigned to certain merchants in Waterford. All this the O'Driscolls very soon found out, and they determined to make the valuable cargo their own. The Portuguese captain was delighted when the charming strangers asked him and his officers to dine with them in their haven. Apparently he suspected nothing when the crew were included in the invitation. It was a case of the spider and the fly. No sooner were the sailors inside the castle than they were seized and clapped into irons, and the work of transferring the wine began. But the Waterford merchants were not the men to have their pride (and their pockets) hurt in this way, and they speedily fitted out an armed vessel to avenge their loss.

The O'Driscolls, still dismantling the wineship, were surprised, and barely escaped with their lives. Flushed with the victory, the Mayor of Waterford sent another expedition some days later, and they laid Baltimore Castle in ruins besides burning all O'Driscoll's ships, about fifty in number. His own galley of thirty oars they towed back to Waterford as evidence of their prowess. Baltimore Haven did not take long to recover from this reverse. Fresh wealth flowed in readily enough from trade with the pirates.

The people of Berehaven were not behindhand in turning their attention to any scheme that would make them money. Their pride, if not their self-interest, would not allow them to play second fiddle to Baltimore. So Donnell O'Sullivan added to his activities as “fence” on a grand scale by leasing fishing rights to foreigners. And, strangely enough, the rights he hired out were for the most part his own to sell. “The coast yields such abundance of sea fish as few places in Christendom do the like,” wrote Sir Thomas Stafford, “and at the fishing time there was such a

resort of fishermen of all nations, although the duties which they paid unto O'Sullivan was very little yet at the least it was worth unto him £1500 yearly." Today the equivalent sum would be at least £15,000.

So continued the rivalry between the two pirate lairs for many years. But Berehaven was the first to fall. On September 16th, 1602, Sir George Carew opened a fierce attack upon the castle of Dunboy. The siege formed part of the General's ruthless suppression of the rebellion of 1600-1603. At the time the haven was garrisoned by one hundred and twenty men only, and Carew's forces numbered at least five thousand, but the gallant defenders held out until the 18th, when the walls were finally breached and the attackers burst in. Even at the very last moment, when the Royalists were inside the castle, the Irish nearly achieved a pyrrhic victory. As the soldiers burst into the magazine they saw Richard MacGeoghegan, the gallant commander of the castle, painfully crawling towards a number of powder barrels with a lighted candle in his hand. They seized him in the nick of time, and although he was mortally wounded, killed him out of hand in a fit of senseless and disgusting brutality.

O'Sullivan himself was fighting elsewhere, and managed to escape to Spain, only to be treacherously stabbed to death by an Anglo-Irishman. As a pirate den, Berehaven may have thoroughly deserved suppression, but Carew did not attack it on this score. He punished the pirates for their alleged disloyalty to the Crown, a matter which was by no means proven. Consequently, the wholesale slaughter which accompanied the capture of Dunboy Castle is a matter which Englishmen prefer to forget. It was unnecessary, unworthy, and unjustified. Only a crumbling fragment now remains of Dunboy Castle, and the point on which it stood is overgrown with trees. Thus fell Berehaven for a time.

[Fuller and Leslie-Melville, 1935: 168173]

As for Baltimore, we are indebted for its story to an Irish source, "The Sack of Baltimore" by H. Barnby (1969) Sir Fineen O'Driscoll "Of the Ships," who appears as an engaging rogue in *Pirate Hal* but now takes on a less romantic air. He turns out to be a collaborator with the English; he sided with them in the Desmond Rebellion. He turned several "murderers" (rebels?) over to the authorities, and was so deeply in debt he began to sell leases on parts of his demesne to English colonists. His Irish subjects were left to fend for themselves.

In 1605 an Englishman named Thomas Croke offered to purchase a lease for twenty-one years of the town of Baltimore and its surrounding ploughlands for £2,000. Sir Fineen O'Driscoll accepted his offer and the lease was drawn up. Surprisingly, there is no record of there having been any complaint from the existing townsfolk. It is possible that by 1605 many Baltimore residents, offended by the presence of English troops in the area, may have moved away to the north or to the comparative sanctuary of one of the larger islands of Roaring Water Bay.

When Thomas Croke purchased his lease from Sir Fineen O'Driscoll in 1605, the English physical presence in West Cork was very small and his scheme to plant several hundred English settlers in the Baltimore area must have been highly acceptable to the authorities in Cork, Dublin and Westminster. If however these same authorities had stopped to ask themselves how such a considerable party of settlers were to maintain themselves in this area, they might have come to some slightly disturbing conclusions. In the words of the old saying, "the law ends at Leap." In the *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1606-1608*, there are twenty-one references to Baltimore and most of these refer to piracy.

However, the formal establishment of the English plantation at Baltimore went steadily ahead. On 3 July 1607 Baltimore was authorised by "His Majesties High Court of Chancery...to hold...a

Friday Market, and two Fairs on 24 June and 28 October and two days after each..." On 26 September 1612 the borough received its official charter. This appointed "...Thomas Crooke, Esq., to be the first Sovereigne, and James Salmon, Daniel Leach, Joseph Carter, William Hudson, Joseph Hoskins, Stephen Hunt, Thomas Bennett, the elder, Thomas Bennett, the younger, Roger Bennett, William Howling, Thomas Germon, and Richard Commy to be the first twelve burgesses...." The sovereign was to hold court for minor offences and civil actions every Friday, while he and his council were empowered to establish byelaws. They were also invested with the duty of electing two discreet men to attend the parliament that James I was planning to summon at Dublin in the near future. Thomas Crooke had been appointed the first sovereign, but for the future, the burgesses were to meet once a year for the especial purpose of electing one of their own number to hold this office.

Those Irish who remained to mingle with the new planters appear to have been quite prepared to put up with any sort of change. However not many elected to remain and a Spaniard who came into Baltimore harbour on a ship in 1608 was told that there were now very few Irish there.

Thomas Crooke's achievement was remarkable. He had, in the words of the Lord Bishop of Cork, "...at his own charges...gathered out of England a whole town of English people, larger and more civilly and religiously ordered than any town in this province that began so lately...."

The reliable Anglican theology of the new West Cork planters enabled the representatives of King James to overlook less attractive features about Thomas Crooke's new plantation. It seems more than possible that Thomas Crooke established his plantation at Baltimore with the intention of trading with pirates. This does not imply that the planters there were to occupy themselves with no other activities, but they were a sea-harbour settlement and relied on visiting ships to purchase their produce and skills in return for money or trade goods. The way in which their customers had acquired money and trade goods was no concern of theirs. The new planters at Baltimore were behaving in exactly the same manner as many harbours in southwest England had behaved for decades, but England under a legalistically-minded king was becoming unsafe for pirates. Thomas Crooke had foreseen this situation developing and had taken steps to profit by it.

The official trade carried through Baltimore was ludicrously small. According to one source, only three ship loads of wine entered the harbour during 1614 and 1615. The unofficial trade must have been considerable. Certainly pirates' goods brought into Ireland through Baltimore were supplied throughout the province and the president of Munster himself and many other leading citizens of Cork are known to have bought from that source. By 1608, no more than two years after the establishment of the English at Baltimore, Thomas Crooke was called before the Privy Council in London to answer charges of having had dealings with pirates. It was this charge that prompted the bishop of Cork's letter of recommendation. The Privy Council acquitted him with all honour; how could they do otherwise? There had been revolts before in Munster, in which English planters had had their throats cut. If ambitious, energetic men such as Richard Boyle and Thomas Crooke were able to persuade large parties of Protestant English to go and colonise this uncertain area, how could the English authorities jeopardize their enterprise by being too nice about their trading methods?

The Privy Council may have acquitted Thomas Crooke and his fellow planters but others were less complaisant. By 1608 the Venetians were writing that there were two chief nests of English pirates, and one of these was on the Irish coast at Baltimore. An English source stated during 1608 that all the harbours of Munster were safe for pirates but that Baltimore was most by them.

also during 1608 the president of Munster wrote that Robinson, a pirate, arrived at Baltimore in a ship of one-hundred twenty tons and twenty cannon. "...at first his strict directions being observed by those that inhabit Baltimore...although they could not be denied ordinary relief by the weak inhabitants, yet they hindered for a while from the commodities that might repair their defects; until, daily re-inforcing themselves with fresh men they grew so fearful to the fisherman and all the country, that having neither the means to defend their own nor to offend them, he was forced to confirm a treaty...with them..." Since the king's chief Officer in the province of Munster confirms having dealings with a pirate at Baltimore, it is reasonable to assume that the inhabitants of that place, surrounded by a still largely Gaelic hinterland and with the nearest officer of the crown many miles away, would have been ready and willing to trade.

They had ways also of covering their actions with a semblance of legality. One of the most successful of this time was a man named Henry Mainwaring. He had accepted a pardon from the King and wrote a most comprehensive work on the methods employed by pirates on the coast of Ireland. He states that when pirates needed supplies of meat they would send a discreet man on shore to seek a farmer with cattle for sale. The farmer would say where he would put the cattle and the pirates would send a party of men ashore to fetch them after dark. These would fire off a musket or two as though they were making a land raid. The local people, amply forewarned, would keep well out of the way. The business was very welcome, said Mainwaring, because cattle sold by this means usually fetched double their market value.

The new English plantation at Baltimore seems to have flourished. King James, embarrassed by the complaints of foreign merchants, insisted on steps being taken to suppress the pirates of south-west Ireland. Once in a while a royal man-o-war sailed along the coast. But the royal ships were usually old and badly maintained. The pirates, whose necks depended on their agility, used small Dutch-built warships which, when regularly defouled, were the swiftest sailors afloat. They seldom allowed themselves to be caught by the royal ships, and if caught, they often seem to have managed to come to an understanding with their captors. Many pirates were operating but very few were hanged. The Dutch obtained King James's permission to search the creeks and harbours of south-west Ireland for pirates, but when they appeared off Baltimore and asked for a pilot to bring them into the harbour, Thomas Crooke told them to be off. This would seem to be a very high line to take with the commander of a Dutch squadron operating with royal permission; but Thomas Crooke must have known what he was doing because he continued to prosper. It is only possible to guess the extent of his financial prosperity, but we know that he became a baronet in 1624 shortly before he died.

The new English community at Baltimore was almost entirely the product of the enterprise, energy and lack of scruple of Sir Thomas Crooke, Bart. It is therefore strangely appropriate that things should have started to go wrong almost from the time of his death.

It seems possible, and in fact is assumed by some writers (e.g. Private hTa/hora), that after Crooke's death the people of Baltimore decided to go straight. Their pilchard fisheries were proving remarkably profitable, and the authorities were slowly increasing their control over the "lawless" regions. We may hypothesize that in 1624 the leaders of Baltimore made it known on the pirate grapevine that the days of hospitality were over, and the port closed to all illegality save a bit of harmless smuggling.

Meanwhile the feckless Sir Fineen had sunk himself even deeper in the mire of debt. A creditor appeared on the scene.



Sir Walter Coppinger, Bart., was a magistrate at Cork City whose acquisitiveness bore a marked resemblance to the swashbuckling behaviour of his Milking forefathers. He recognised just as clearly as Richard Boyle or Thomas Crooke that West Cork was underpopulated and ripe for development. He was, however, a staunch Roman Catholic and no lover of the new English Protestants that were beginning to settle the land. He had no wish to plant Englishmen in West Cork. His interest was in building up his personal estate in this area. His original acquisitions were mainly from the old Irish proprietors; sometimes their title was confused and Sir Walter found himself in dispute with other occupants. On these occasions his manners could be rough. The London East India Company purchased woods high up the tidal estuary of the Bandon river in 1612. Here they began to build ships. Sir Walter chose to believe the land belonged to him. He did not care to see Englishmen cutting down his trees so he set armed men to harry them. These hired muscle-men terrified the shipyard workmen and broke down the dams that had been built to operate the hammer mills. The dispute over Dun Daniel woods subsided into oblivion, but Sir Walter was soon appearing in the records again. He next made an attempt to take over Baltimore. His claim was not a frivolous one.

In 1573 Fineen O'Driscoll had surrendered his lands to the English Crown along with other tribal lords of Munster. This was part of a complicated land title reform the net result of which was that Sir Fineen now held title to his lands in person and not, as previously, merely in his condition as elected leader of the Sept. Fineen had been a young man when he took this step; for many years the change had no practical effect and his life in West Cork continued in its normal pattern. In 1583 he visited London and received his knighthood. As Sir Fineen O'Driscoll his standard of living may well have proved more expensive. In 1602, his prestige suffered a serious blow when he was obliged to hand over three of his castles to the English, but his writ still ran in West Cork and in the same year he detained and handed over to the English authorities wanted murderers who had sought refuge in his territories. However, his financial position seems to have deteriorated sharply about then and one of the immediate results of this was his sale of a twenty-one-year lease of Baltimore to Thomas Crooke in 1605.

About 1616 it seems likely that Sir Walter Coppinger lent Sir Fineen O'Driscoll a sum of money on security of his lands occupied by the plantation at Baltimore. Sir Thomas Crooke had purchased the lease of Baltimore only for twenty-one years. The purchase had been made in 1605, which meant that in 1626 the lease either had to be renegotiated or the use of the property returned to Sir Fineen, his heirs or assignees. If Sir Fineen did not repay the loan, Sir Walter Coppinger automatically became his assignee and the absolute owner of Baltimore on expiry of the lease. In the meantime he demonstrated the firmness of his intentions by harrying the English planters in every way that he was able. At first [Sir Walter] used force but the planters seem to have soon organised themselves adequately for their own defence; accordingly, he altered his tactics and began to institute civil and criminal actions against individual planters in rapid succession. As a magistrate of long standing in Cork city, Sir Walter must have made a disturbing opponent.

Sir Thomas Crooke died in 1624 and the Baltimore plantation lost its main guide and sponsor. In 1626 the lease held from Sir Fineen came to its end and the land and buildings occupied by the English at Baltimore would fall into the hands of that inveterate opponent of the new English, Sir Walter Coppinger. The planters applied to the House of Lords for relief. This was a shrewd move, for the English authorities were obviously going to be most reluctant to see a Protestant English plantation, so strategically placed in the remote south western parts of Ireland, fall into

the hands of a Roman Catholic gentleman of doubtful loyalty. Negotiations were set in hand. It is not known what form these took but there were certain results. On 14 April 1629 a deed of defeasance was signed by Sir Fineen and Sir Walter. The result of this was that the English planters remained in undisturbed possession of their leasehold property at Baltimore, although Sir Walter got possession of the fort of Dun na Sead.

[Barnby, 1969]

So-to sum up-in 1629 the creditor Sir Walter Coppinger was bilked of possession of Baltimore. Sir Walter hated the English, and had used violence against them several times. He hated the people of Baltimore because they had successfully resisted his advances, and because they were Imperialist Protestants. Sir Walter had two very good motives-in his own mind at least for doing an injury to that little colony patriotism and profit. Two years later, a great injury did in fact befall Baltimore. , as the lawyers say.

## THE CORSAIR'S CALENDAR

Throughout this study we've used the words *corsair* and *pirate* as if they were synonyms, but this is really not quite correct. In the strict sense a pirate is a sea-going criminal, while a corsair operates like *privateer* who is granted "letters of marque" or a commission by one government to attack the shipping of another. A privateer is only a criminal from the point of view of the ships he attacks; from his own point of view he's committing a legitimate act of war. In the case of the corsairs, the situation is complicated by the concept of a religious war which transcends national interests. Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli commissioned privateers in the name of the Sublime Porte, which expected the corsairs to honor all Ottoman treaties, and not to attack ships of nations at peace with Turkey. Several times attempts were made to discipline corsairs who broke this rule; if the attempts were half-hearted and usually unsuccessful, the corsairs-by their own lights-were simply obeying a higher power, the demands of the permanent *jihad*. Brown quotes Moroccan historians to demonstrate the ideological basis of Sale's actions:

In a chapter headed "The Fleet of the Holy War or the Slawi Piracy" (*ustul al-jihab aw al-qarsana as-salawiya*), Muhammad Hajji has pointed out that piracy, the Arabic *qa/lvana* is not to be understood in terms of the foreign derivations of its original Latin meaning, that is, the French *course* privateering. "Rather," he writes, "I mean by the Slawi corsairs those warriors (*mujahids*), Andalous and Moroccans, who boldly embarked in their ships on the waves of the ocean to defend the territory of the homeland or to rise against the Spaniards who forced upon the Muslims of al-Andalus the worst kind of suffering and unjustly made them leave their homes and possessions."

Thus, for the people of Sale, fighting and looting on high seas or the coasts of Europe was justified as a continuation both of the holy wars of the earlier dynasties and of the defense of the coast by the likes of al-Ayyashi. The corsairs, "men of noble and proud character," had the blessings of the saints of Sale and were integrated into the community of the city. That is not to deny, however, that at least some pirates were renegades and that their original purpose in coming to Sale was to share in the general wealth brought by the "holy war," "Look in the trunk of the Hassar family and you will find an old Christian sailor's cap. The uluj [Christian slave] origin of the Fenish family is no more hidden than the blue of their eyes" are derisory comments still heard in Sale when people talk about some of the old renegade families of the city. Although there were aslamis (coll., converts to Islam) in Sale, their origins were not an obstacle to complete assimilation to the norms and values of the community, nor to their reaching positions of power in Society. The pressures toward social and cultural integration in Sale made these renegade pirates into warriors in the name of religion."

[Brown, 1971: 53]

Sale-Rabat of course, was beholden to no outside government in the first half of the 17th century, but commissioned corsairs in the name of the Republic; and the Republic consisted-more-or-less-of the corsairs themselves. Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli have been called "corsair states", but in truth only "Sallee" deserves that definition.

The easiest way to understand the difference between a pirate and a privateer is to examine the different ways they split up the booty. Pirate captains very frequently took only one-and-a-half or two shares, the ship's officers took one-and-a-half or one-and-a-fourth, the crewmen one share, and noncombatants (boys and musicians!) one-half or three-fourths. By contrast a privateer captain usually took 40 shares to the crewman's single share. Of course, one share in a successful privateering cruise could be worth far more than a salary in the merchant marine-or unpaid impressment into a Navy- but the contrast with piratical egalitarianism is very striking. Pirates were very nearly communistic in their pure state. Scholars who see them simply as proto-capitalists are making a big mistake. Pirates don't fit the Marxist definition of "social bandit" (i.e., "primitive revolutionary") because pirates have no "social" context no society of peasants for whom they serve as focal elements of resistance. Marxists like Hobsbawm never include the pirates among their approved "precursors" of true radicalism because they see the pirates-at best-as *individuals* involved in resistance simply as a form of self-aggrandizement and primitive accumulation. They forget that *groups* of pirates formed their own social spheres, and that the "governments" of these groups (as expressed in ships' "articles") were both anarchistic in affording maximum individual freedoms, and communistic in eliminating economic hierarchy. The social organization of the pirates has no parallel in any of the *states* of the 15-18th centuries- *except Rabat-Sale* The Republic of Bou Regreg was not a pure pirate utopia, but it was a state founded on piratical principles; in fact, it was the *only* state ever founded on these principles.[Unless it be G. d'Annunzio's infamous Republic of Fiume (1919), which financed its brief existence by piracy, and had a constitution based on the idea of music as the only force of social organization. See Philippe Julien, trans., D'Annunzio.]

Once again, an examination of the division of spoils will give us a precise structural insight into corsair society. In the Ottoman Barbary states:

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The scale for division of the profits of a cruise is instructive. In the 1630's the pasha took 12 percent in Algiers, 10 percent in Tunis, the repairs for the mole 1 percent; the marabout, 1 percent. Of the remaining 88 or 86 percent, half went to the shipowners, and the other half to the crew and soldiers. Of the second half the reis received 10-12 parts, the agha 3 parts, the pilot 3 parts, navigator 3 parts, sail master 3 parts, master of the hatch 2 parts, surgeon 3 parts, sailors 2 parts; if there were Moors aboard, they were given only 1 part "because they are people on whom one does not count much." If any of these people were slaves, the patron took their shares and sometimes gave part of it to the slaves. Dan's account of the division corresponds approximately with those of other informants.

[Wolfe, 1979: 144. The Marabout is the Sufi or shrine-guardian who blesses the ships and prays for their success.] We see that ship owners receive half the profits after "taxes", but in many cases the captains owned their own ships. Even so, this practise certainly seems proto-capitalist. On the other hand, the captain as captain (rather than as owner) receives only 10 to 12 times as much as the worst paid crew man, while European privateer captains were paid 40 times. This seems to indicate a somewhat egalitarian approach.

The data from Sale is a bit difficult to interpret. According to Coindreau, the usual method of divvying the spoils under the Moorish Republic was as follows:

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-10% to the central authority (the Divan of Sale);

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-half the remainder, to the outfitter [l'arnzateur] (or to the rais) to indemnify him for damages incurred on the expedition;

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-the other half-45% of the total booty-to the ship's crew. Officers, pilot, master gunner and surgeon usually received 3 parts, while the master of manoevers, the calfat, and the cannoneers-two parts.

[Coindreau, p. 64]

No prey, no pay, as all pirates agreed-but even in the event of a fruitless voyage, the crew was not charged for provisions.

This doesn't tell us what the captain received if he was not the owner/outfitter of the ship, but rather commissioned directly by the Divan (which owned ships in its own right) or by some group of shareholders or shipowners. Assuming the captain owned and provisioned his ship, he earned 45%, more or less the same as a European privateer captain. If not, he probably made something more like the 10-12% of the Algerian captains. Captains who owned many ships could become exceedingly wealthy, as in the case of Murad Reis, the Dutch Renegado who actually rose to the leadership of the Republic.

Clearly Rabat/Sale was not organized like a pure pirate venture-but it was not organized like a European or Islamic monarchy either. The big difference between Algiers and Sale was that the "tax" off the top went to Istanbul in the first case but in the second case, *stayed in Sale*. It was used to benefit the corsairs (repair the ramparts, finance expeditions, etc.) rather than to fatten some distant sultan. Sale's wars with the Saadians, the Marabout al-Ayyashi, and the Alewite dynasty, etc.} all centered around the 10%, which was both the symbol and the cost of corsair independence. Sale was neither as anarchic nor as communistic as "Libertatia" (see below) or Other real-life pirate utopias-but it was far more so than any European country. Its Governor-Admiral and its Divan were elected and could be un-elected every year if they failed to represent the people's interests. Everyone capable of shipping on a cruise stood a chance at wealth. Even "captives of war" could earn freedom and wealth as Renegadoes. As for the Professional pirates who joined the Republic, once again we see that although they lost the pure autonomy of real piracy, they gained a home, a society, a source of backing, a market, and a place to *enjoy* their wealth-everything a pirate might well lack and most yearn for. It was worth taking a cut in pay to gain all that, obviously.

The mouth of the Bou Regreg river, which served RabatSale as a harbor, was protected by a treacherous sand-bar which prevented enemy ships and European naval fleets with their deep keels from getting close enough to shore for an effective bombardment-but this feature also limited the corsairs in certain ways. For one thing, their vessels-even the "round ships"-had to be small and shallow-draft, which made long cruises difficult. Fleeing into port under pursuit, they might be detained by a low tide and suffer capture within sight of home, as happened on several sad occasions. But whatever the Saletin ships lacked-storage for provisions, for example, or sufficient tonnage to support much heavy cannon-they made up for in speed and maneuverability, and in the profound seamanship of their captains. Moreover, Moslem navigators were familiar with (and even invented) such scientific devices as the astrolabe, and no longer depended on dead reckoning or coast-hugging tactics. Officers and crew alike made do with very short provisions and very uncomfortable quarters. Thus the area of activity of the corsairs was greater than might be expected; the raid on Iceland was an exception, but even the English channel was unsafe (a Saltee Rover was once captured in the Thames estuary).

In the 17th century Winter was still an off-season for merchant shipping, corsairs, and even grand navies. The corsairs followed a seasonal pattern and spent at least three or four months every year at home in Sale, attending to politics or love affairs, married life or debauch, wheeling and dealing, repairing and shipbuilding-or perhaps even to the practise of Sufism-according to their wonts and wants.

Come Springtime, usually in May, a corsair would look for a position with the fleet, which probably consisted (during our period) of forty or sixty small ships of the types depicted by Coindreau:

[ships image here]

Roughly half the fleet would head north, probably to the lucrative hunting ground off the Iberian peninsula, and the other half would turn south toward the Canaries and Azores, where they would lurk in wait for stragglers from the huge flotillas of Spain and Portugal returning from the New World with cargoes of gold. For ordinary cruising purposes two or three ships would stick together; in case a prize was captured, a vessel could be spared to escort it back to Sale while the rest kept prowling the waves. Each ship held scant provisions of *boucan* [On Hispaniola the Buccaneers were hunters who prepared boucan or smoked dried meat for ship provisions.] and cous-cous for perhaps two months at most. If ships needed to re-provision or repair, they might call in at any of several Moroccan coastal towns (at least during periods when these were not held by European powers) such as Tetouan, Mamora, Fedala, Azemmour, or Safi. Sometimes some of the fleet headed through the Straits of Gibraltar and raided the shipping and even the coasts of Mediterranean Spain and France- but this was usually considered the proper stomping grounds of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. But the other Barbary state corsairs seldom if ever made it as far into the Atlantic as the Sallee Rovers. In 1625 they carried off captives from Plymouth in England; in 1626 five ships were seized off the coast of Wales; in 1627 they reached Iceland and sacked the city of Reykjavik, where the booty was scant but the blond captives no doubt proved popular in the slave markets. A great deal of activity centered in the waters between England and Ireland, and we assume that the corsairs used some of the remote lawless smugglers' ports of Southern and Western Ireland as friendly harbours. In the Newfoundland banks the Saletin fleet captured more than 40 fishing vessels in the space of two years, and in 1624 a dozen or so ships from Sale appeared on the coasts off Acadia or Nova Scotia. When the English fleet came to Sale in 1637, the purpose was to ransom poor fishermen from English vessels seized off Newfoundland.

One musn't imagine the typical Sallee Rover-or indeed any sensible pirate-as lustning for violence, or even as particularly cruel. The Comte de Castries put it thus: "Rather than chance the glory of combat they preferred their prey disarmed and peaceful." [Quoted by Coindreau, 1948: 133] It's an historian's cliché to say that the 17th century was "cruel", or indeed that *any* century prior to the 19th or 20th was "cruel". Once the modernist Euro-American chauvinism is stripped from such remarks, we are left with a *perceived difference* between "then" and "now". The modern era has succeeded in repressing consciousness of its own cruelty by mediating between the act and the perception of the act, by means of technology. We call up and revel in *images* of violence in ways that would seem utterly diabolical to the meanest thug in the Bou Regreg Republic, and we create death and destruction in precisely the same disembodied and alienated fashion: by pushing a button. In the 17th century, despite advances in artillery, most life-and-death struggles had to be decided in hand-to-hand combat, using a technology not much advanced over that of the Bronze Age. (In fact, one credulous European traveller, William Lempriere, was persuaded by a humorous "native informant" in Sale that the corsairs' chief tactic was to hurl *rocks*

at other ships-and this seemed quite reasonable to him, if a trifle primitive.) [Lempriere, 1791] A few pirates, like Low and Blackbeard, appear to have been sea-going sadists in a very precise and clinical sense of the term, and no doubt Sale attracted a few such types. But the truth is that combat is *dangerous*, and it's *hard work*. Corsairs were interested in booty, not "glory" (as a Frenchman might assume) or "manliness" (as an Englishman might assume); they were happy to be considered "cowards and bullies" so long as they won. And therefore they resorted to trickery and camouflage first, and only whipped out their flintlocks and scimitars as a last resort. Piracy can be viewed as an extreme case of the zerowork mentality: five or six months lolling around the Moorish cafes, then a summer cruise on a nice blue ocean, a few hours of exertion, and hey presto, another year of idleness has been financed. If pirates weren't lazy, they'd be cobblers or lead miners or fishermen-but like gangsters in old movies they thought "work is for saps," and used every expedient to avoid it. As Pere Dan said, "The corsairs give chase to no Christian merchants without believing themselves the stronger; for if it be not the case that they enjoy an advantage of several to few, or of a great fleet to a small one, they rarely attack-for it's true that these infamous pirates are dastardly cowards at heart and never give battle without possessing great advantage." [Coindreau, 1948: 134]

Naturally every corsair vessel would carry a fine collection of the flags and pennants of all nations, and would first attempt to pass as English to an English ship or Spanish to a Spanish; their own flag, the Man in the Moon, was doubtless rarely seen. [The flag of Sale, using an Islamic crescent but adding the image of a human face, seems to symbolize the Renegado's creed with heraldic precision. One is reminded of the legend that the Templars worshipped the Head of Baphomet and that the Moor's Head is a symbol in Rosicrucian alchemy; it's interesting to note that some modern Christian Fundamentalists consider the Man in the Moon a satanic device.] The trick of switching flags with Algerian corsairs has already been described.

Henry Mainwaring, in his memoirs, relates that the Sallee Rovers would strike all their sails at dawn and send a look-out aloft to scan the horizons for possible prey-once sighted, the potential victim would be scrutinized at length and discussed: merchantman or naval vessel? Too big to tackle or too small to bother? What strategy to adopt, what flag to unfurl, etc.? [Quoted in Coindreau, 1948: 137]

Having decided on pursuit and action, the corsairs would hope that a few cannon shots would induce a rational mood in the enemy captain (especially if his ship was insured!), and an immediate surrender. If not, they would have to board. "It is a terrible thing," says Pere Dan, "to behold with what fury they attack a vessel. They swarm aboard the poopdeck, sleeves rolled to elbows and scimitars in hand, all together making a great hullabaloo to wither the courage of their victims." Hopefully the show of menace and the wild shrieking would do the trick-real combat was the last resort and least favored tactic of all.

Whether or not a ship carried specie or cargo of any value, its crew and passengers constituted a guaranteed source of income.["From 1618 to 1626 alone, 6,000 Christians were captured and ransomed and prizes taken to the value of more than fifteen million pounds. In ten years, 162939, the Morisco Customs registered a total of 25 or 26 million ducats." [Caille, 1949 224] In 1626 a petition was presented to the Duke of Buckingham by "the distress'd wives of almost 2,000 poor mariners remaining most miserable captives in Sallee in Barbary." These poor husbands are "suffering such unspeakable misery and tortures that they are almost forc'd to convert from their Christian religion." [Norris, 1990: 66] The price of saving 2,000 souls from turning Turke might well be too high even for a Duke.] In Islamic Law "Captives of (holy) war" were not considered

in the same category as “slaves”, but in some ways their position was worse. Slaves had distinct rights in Law, after all, but captives were simply human booty. That Sale financed its freedom by the ransoming and sale of human beings naturally tarnishes that freedom in our eyes, but we should hesitate to apply our modern sentiments to Sale alone. The Knights of Malta practised the same economics, but enjoyed no protodemocratic freedoms-and the British Navy “impressed” unwilling recruits into virtual slavery. In any case, since Moroccan sailors had given up the use of oar-driven galleys, few of their captives would suffer the fate of thousands upon thousands (like Miguel de Cervantes, or the early American anarchist William Harris of Rhode Island) [See Wilson, 1993] who languished as “galley slaves” in Algerian ships-or for that matter, in Maltese or Spanish ships.

He that's condemn'd to th'oare hath first his face,  
 Eyebrowes and head close shaven (for more disgrace  
 cannot betide a Christian). Then, being stript  
 to th' girdle (as when roagues are to be whipt),  
 Chain'd are they to the seates where they sit rowing,  
 Five in a row together; a Turke going  
 on a large plancke between them, and though their eyes  
 are ready to starte out with pulling, he cries  
 “Worke, worke you Christian cures,” and though none needs  
 one blow for loytering, yet his bare back bleeds  
 and riseth up in bunches.

— from “The Lamentable Cries of Prisoners in Algiers under the Turkes” (1624) [in Norris, 1990: 66]

Defoe describes Robinson Crusoe's life as a Sallee captive in more realistic terms than the fund-raising fanatics who toured Europe edifying audiences with tales of exotic tortures and rapes, and who were frequently suspected even then-of “yellow journalism”. Sale had no vast agricultural lands upon which to use their slaves, as in America, nor any industries in which to employ unskilled forced labor. The captives were primarily merchandise and as always with merchandise the rule was, you break it, you buy it. No one pays ransom for a corpse.

Thus the corsair's first task, which began immediately after taking a prize, was to determine the identities, or at least the qualities, of their captives. Renegadoes who spoke their languages would interrogate them, using guile by preference to torture, to elicit details. The corsairs developed a fascination with banA.s: soft hands of an aristo or merchant, calloused hands of a mere mariner, peculiar signs and deformations of certain trades and crafts, the telltale inkstain of literacy, even the lines of chiromancy to determine health, fate, personality. Certain captives, too poor for ransom but possessed of valuable skills, would be offered freedom if they turned Turk- armorers, metallurgists, shipbuilders, and the like were highly prized, and a literate man might aspire to the rank of seagoing scribe (one for each crew, to read captive ships' manifests and logs), or even a clerk's job in the Divan, or with some merchant or consul.

A young Irishman from Galway named Richard Joyce (or Joyes), emigrating to the West Indies in 1675, was captured by Algerian corsairs and held captive in Algiers for 14 years. There upon his arrival

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he was purchased by a wealthy Turk who followed the profession of a goldsmith, and who observing his slave...to be tractable and ingenious, instructed him in his trade in which he speedily



became an adept. The Moor, as soon as he heard of his release [i.e., that Joyce had been ransomed], offered him, in case he should remain, his only daughter in marriage, and with her half his property, but all these, with other tempting and advantageous proposals, Joyce resolutely declined; on his return to Galway he married, and followed the business of a goldsmith with considerable success, and, having acquired a handsome independence, he was enabled to purchase the estate of Rahoon...from Colonel Whaley, one of Cromwell's old officers.

[Quoted from J. Hardiman, 1820.]

The secret of Joyce's success, according to Galway legend, was a ring he designed in Algiers based on Moorish symbols, a crowned heart (sometimes with a rose) held by two hands-the famous Claddagh Ring, symbol of love and friendship, almost as "Irish" as the Shamrock.

[ring image herering.gif]

Joyce was not the only Barbary captive who ended by owing his fortune to some trade practiced or even learned in captivity. [For this and other fascinating legends (e.g. the first Claddagh ring was dropped in the lap of a young girl by an eagle!), see the delightful amateur history by Richard Joyce's descendant Gcily Joyce, *Claddagh Ring Story*, 1990.]

One of the rare first-hand accounts of Sale was written by a French captive, Germaine Mouette, "captured at sea December 16, 1670, sold at Sale on All Saints Day, for the sum of 360 *ecus*."

His owners numbered four, of whom one actually held him as a slave. The other three each owned one-sixth of Mouette, having gone right away to the fondouk [or bagno, slave quarters] where he was taken after his sale [i.e., the other three bought sub-shares from the first owner]. The oldest was Muhammad al-Marrakohi, a government official, the second was a merchant of wool and oil called Mohammad Liebus, and the third was a Jew, Rabbi Yamin. M. al-Marrakohi took the slave home with him, where his wife gave Mouette white bread and butter with honey, and a few dates and raisins of Damascus. He was then returned to the fondouk, where he received a visit from the Jew who greeted him ceremoniously and promised him his freedom if his family would pay the ransom demanded by the four owners. If he did not at once write a letter to France to ask for this sum, he would be beaten with sticks and left to die in a pit. Mouette at once complied, but decided to lie and pretend to be no more than the brother of a cobbler-so the renegado who was serving as translator for the Jew declared that no profit could be expected in the sale of this slave. Next day Mouette was sent to the third owner, the wool and oil merchant, whose wife and mother-in-law took pity on the captive. At first they put him to grinding wheat, but when that task proved too tiring, they made him companion to the merchant's little son. When the good wife saw that the boy had grown attached to Mouette, she regaled him with more bread and butter, honey and fruits, and had removed from his legs the 25-pound chain he'd been forced to wear. She begged him to turn renegade and marry her niece." [Mouette managed to weasel out of this situation by showering the woman with "the most tender and touching words in the world," ending up more in favor than before.]

Mouette remained there for a year without suffering too much, thanks to his supposed poverty. But at last the fourth owner, now Governor of the Casbah, grew impatient. He claimed his rights in Mouette and took him off to work in his stable. The slave was now reduced to black bread, and shared cramped and noisome quarters with other captives and poor Arabs. The governor renewed his demands for a ransom of 1,000 *ecus*, but Mouette still insisted on his poverty, and so now was sent to work with masons who were repairing the castle ramparts. The other workers mistreated him and beat him cruelly-thus finally inspiring him to raise the ransom money-and at last regain his freedom.

[Penz, 1944: 13-14]

Compared with the horrendous tales of captivity circulated by Redemptionist Friars and other propagandists, *Sieur Mouette's* story has the ring of authenticity: clearly the captive's fate was no picnic, but it had its ups and downs, and even its possible routes of salvation or escape. Thus such accounts as the legend of Richard Joyce seem credible; and thus also we may understand how *seductive* the possibility of conversion to Islam might appear to captives like Joyce and Mouette. Those Moorish “nieces” for one thing! Those oriental women with their (almost) irresistible love magic!

## PIRATE UTOPIAS

And so, having followed our Corsairs' calendar through the social season -Winter -we return to Spring and the urge to set out once again roaming the open seas. I can't say that these scattered images of *Renegado culture* add up to anything like a hypothesis or a theory or even a very coherent picture. We've certainly had to use our imagination more than a "real" historian would allow, erecting a lot of suppositions on a shaky framework of generalizations, and adding a touch of fantasy (and what piratologist has ever been able to resist fantasy?). I can only say that I've satisfied my own curiosity at least to this extent: That something like a Renegado culture *could have existed*; that all the ingredients for it were present, and contiguous, and synchronic. Moreover, there exists good circumstantial evidence for this culture in what we might call its one great artifact-the Moorish Corsair Republic(s) of the Bou Regreg. Such an original concept would almost seem to depend on a *depth of origin* which can only be labelled "cultural", i.e., sociologically complex, and self-involved enough to be called (and to call itself) *different*. The Mafia names itself "Our Thing"; the corsairs called their "thing" the Republic of Sale-not just a pirate hang-out or safe harbor, but a pirate utopia, a planned structure for a corsair society. Perhaps a kind of Franco or lingua franca might have emerged in Sale as in Algiers, though we have no evidence for it. But Sale had its own language of signs and institutions, of relations and ideas, of goods and peoples, which clearly coalesced into some identifiable social entity. Exiles-whether Jews, Moriscos, or European rogues-created a cross-cultural synergy (against a Moorish background) which can be identified as a new synthesis rather than simply a mishmash of styles. In our conclusion we shall try to analyze this culture as a *patterns of conversions*, of literal cross-cultural adventures, of *translations*.

As a preliminary move in this analysis, it might prove interesting to compare the political structure of the Triple Republic with other political structures. Two obvious comparisons spring to mind-first, the other Barbary states, especially Algiers; and second, other "pirate utopias" elsewhere in the world.

We've already noted that although Algiers never really attained independence from the Sublime Porte, it managed to concoct a bizarre sort of freedom for itself out of the shouting-matches in the Divan of the *Ocak*, the connivances of the pirate *Taiffe*, the sheer cowardice of various Ottoman bureaucrats, and-if all else failed-the "democracy of assassination". The legislative structure of the Bou Regreg Republic was almost certainly modeled on that of the Algerian *taiffe* -in fact, at times the two bodies may have even shared members. But in Sale, the "Taiffe" ruled alone, as a Divan, without other power-sharing institutions as in Algiers. Apparently the Sale Divan, or rather Divans, were organized more democratically than the Algerian model. Grand Admirals were elected for one-year terms, as were the 14 or 16 captains of the assembly. Bureaucratic appointments were made-Customs and Excise, port officials, guardians of the peace (not a very efficient lot, one might surmise), etc.-but there was a clear and obvious intention to prevent political power from ossifying or even stabilizing to any significant degree. Clearly the Andalusians

and corsairs liked to keep things fluid- even to the point of turbulence. All attempts to establish real control, at least in Rabat and the Casbah, were met with immediate violence.

May we surmise that this autonomy meant something more to the corsairs than merely a chance to maximize profits? In fact-was their brand of “perpetual revolution” really compatible with any serious proto-capitalist designs and ambitions? Wouldn't a monarchy (preferably a corrupt monarchy) have better served the purposes of simple fiscal aggrandizement? Isn't there something quixotic about the whole Bou Regreg phenomenon? With the possible exceptions of the Venetian or Dutch Republics of oligarchs, and the *Taiffe* of Algiers, the corsairs lacked any real-world models for their democratic experiment. [They might have known about the Uskoks, pirates who lived on islands off the Yugoslavian coast and preyed mostly on Moslem and Venetian shipping, and seem to have had a kind of egalitarian-tribal form of government. [See Bracewell, 1992]] But the *idea* of a republic was very much in the air-and by 1640 would emerge into European history with the revolutions in England, then America, then France. Was it just an accident of history that all this should be preceded by the *Republic* of Sale? Or should we re-write the historical sequence to read: *Sale*, England, America, France? An embarrassing thought, perhaps: Moorish pirates and renegade converts to Islam as the hidden forefathers of Democracy. Better not pursue it.

Later in the 17th and early in the 18th century, a number of independent “pirate utopias” came into being elsewhere in the world. The most famous of these were Hispaniola, where the Buccaneers created their own short-lived highly anarchic society; Libertatia, in Madagascar; Ranter's Bay, also in Madagascar; and Nassau, in the Bahamas, which was the last classical pirate utopia.

Most historians have failed to note the significance of the pirates' *land enclaves*, seeing them simply as resting-places between cruises. The notion of a *pirate society* is a contradiction in terms in most theories of history, whether Marxist or otherwise-but the Buccaneers of Hispaniola (modern Santo Domingo) constituted just such a society. Hispaniola was a sort of No Go Zone in the late 16th or early 17th century; the Native population had declined, and no European power held an effective claim. Shipwrecked sailors, deserters, runaway slaves and serfs (“Maroons”) and other dropouts began to find themselves in Hispaniola, free of all governance, and able to make a living of sorts as hunters. Feral cattle and pigs, descended from the herds of failed and vanished attempts at settlements, roamed the forest, along with wild game. *Boucan* or smoke-dried meat (a technique learned from the native Caribs) could be exchanged with passing ships for other merchandise. Here originated the “Brethren of the Coast”, quite conscious of their freedom and organized (minimally and egalitarianly) to preserve it. Later communities were founded in Tortuga and New Providence. The Buccaneers turned only gradually to piracy, and when they did so they banded together under “Articles” or ships' constitutions, some of them quoted by Exquemelin (the only eye-witness chronicler of the Buccaneers in their “golden age”). The Articles are almost the only authentic pirate documents in existence. They generally called for election of all officers except Ship's Quartermaster and other “artists” such as sailmaker, cook, or musician. Captains were elected and received as little as one-and-a-half or two times a crewman's share. Corporal punishment was outlawed, and disagreements even between officers and men were resolved at a drumhead court, or by the Code Duello. Sometimes a clause would be inserted by some dour Welsh pirate (like “Black Bart” Roberts) forbidding women and boys on board ship- but usually not. Liquor was never forbidden. Pirate ships were true republics, each ship (or fleet) an independent floating democracy.

The early Buccaneers lived a fairly idyllic life in the woods, a life marked by extremes of poverty and plenty, cruelty and generosity, and punctuated by desperate ventures to sea in leaky canoes and jury-rigged sloops. The Buccaneer way of life had an obvious appeal: interracial harmony, class solidarity, freedom from government, adventure, and possible glory. Other endeavors sprang up. Belize was first settled by Buccaneers. The town of Port Royal on Jamaica became their stomping ground; its haunted ruins can still be seen beneath the sea that drowned it whole in 1692. But even before this quietus of biblical proportions the Buccaneer life had already come to an end. The brilliant Henry Morgan, bold and lucky, rose to leadership, organized the amazing Buccaneer invasion of Panama in 1671-then took the Pardon along with an English appointment as Governor and High Judge, and returned to his old haunts as the executioner of his old comrades. It was certainly the end of an era; the surviving Buccaneers, cut adrift from permanent land bases, became *pirates*.

But the “golden age” dream lingered on: the sylvan idyll of Hispaniola became both a myth of origin, and a political goal. From now on, whenever the pirates had a chance, they would attempt the foundation of permanent or semi-permanent land enclaves. The ideal conditions included proximity to sea-lanes, friendly Natives (and Native women), seclusion and remoteness from all writ and reality of European power, a pleasant tropical climate, and perhaps a trading post or tavern where they could squander their booty. They were prepared to accept temporary leadership in a combat situation, but on shore they preferred absolute freedom even at the price of violence. In pursuit of booty, they were willing to live or die by radical democracy as an organizing principle; but in the enjoyment of booty, they insisted on anarchy. Some shore-enclaves consisted of nothing more than a hidden harbor, a beach where ships' hulls could be scraped, and a spring of clean water. Others were vicious little ports like Port Royal or Baltimore, run by “respectable” crooks like Thomas Crooke, who were simply parasites on piracy. But other enclaves can really only be called intentional communities-after all, they were intended, and they were communal and therefore can rightfully be considered as *Pirate Utopias*.

In the early 1700's the scene of action shifted from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean. Europe had begun its colonialist-imperialist relations with the “Near” East and India, but a great deal of territory remained “untamed”. The perfect location for land-enclaves proved to be Madagascar, conveniently located near the Islamic pilgrimage sea route to Arabia and Mecca. The famous Capt. Avery established a legend by scoring the imperial Moghul dhow on its way from India to the Hajj, winning a diamond the size of an egg, and “marrying” a Moghul princess; the diamond and other jewels were reputedly buried somewhere around or in Boston Harbor and have never been recovered. Other pirates had no desire to return to either America or Europe, and Madagascar looked promising. Neither Islam nor Christianity had penetrated the huge island, which remained tribal, pagan, and even “megalithic in its hundreds of Native “kingdoms”. [For Megalithic practices in Madagascar, see Mohen, 1990: 55-58] Some tribes proved eager for alliances with the pirates, and some of the women too. The climate was ideal, a few trading posts were opened, and the concept of the Pirate Utopia was revived. In some cases an individual adventurer might “marry the king's daughter” or in some other way insinuate himself into Native society; in other cases a group of pirates would settle in their own village, near a friendly tribe, and work out their own social arrangements.

One such utopia was founded at “Ranter's Bay”—a place-name which, as C. Hill points out, lends some credence to the assumption that radical antinomian sects may have found adherents amongst the pirates [Hill, 1985]. according to Daniel Defoe's *The King of the pirates* (1720), Capt.

Avery himself settled for a while in Madagascar as a “mock-king”. Hill points out that “Defoe stressed the libertarian aspects of Avery's settlement. 'In a free state, as we were, everybody was free to go wherever they would.'" [*ibid.* p. 178] Another Madagascar settlement was made by one Capt. North and his crew. But without a doubt the most interesting and the most famous of the Madagascar utopias-certainly the most otopi(zll-was “Libertatia” (or Libertalia).

Our only source for Libertatia and its founder Capt. Mission is a book written by Daniel Defoe, under the pen-name “Captain Charles Johnson”, *The General History of the Pyrates* (1724-28). It is not a work of fiction, and a great deal of it can be supported by archival material, but it is clearly meant as a popular work, long on color and excitement, short on documentation. Defoe claimed to have derived all his information about Libertatia from a “Mission MS” in his possession. According to Defoe, this was the tale told by the manuscript:

Youngest son of an ancient Provencal family, Mission leaves home at 15 to study at the military academy at Angiers, then volunteers for service aboard a French man-of-war in the Mediterranean. While on leave in Rome he meets a “lewd” Dominican priest named Caraccioli who has lost his faith and decides to ship out with Mission. In a battle with a pirate, both are distinguished by their bravery. Gradually Caraccioli converts Mission to atheism and communism, or rather to “perfect Deism”.

Then, in a fight with an English ship, the French captain and officers are killed. Caraccioli nominates Mission for the captaincy, and both men deliver long speeches to the crew, persuading them of their revolutionary designs (and mentioning Alexander the Great, Henry IV and VII of England, and “Mahomet”, as figures of inspiration!) They persuade the crew to found a “new marine republic.” “Every man is born free, and has as much right to what will support him as to the air he respires.”

The bo'sun Mathew le Tonder suggests flying the black flag (the so-called Jolly Roger) as their standard-but Caraccioli objects, saying “they were no pirates but men who were resolved to effect the Liberty which God and Nature gave them.” He makes reference to “Peoples' Rights and Liberties,” “shaking the yolk of tyranny,” the “misery of oppression and poverty.” “Pirates were men of no principle and led dissolute lives; but *their* lives were to be brave, just, and innocent.” For their emblem they choose a white ensign with the motto “For God and Liberty.” (All this sounds more like *Deism* than “Atheism”, but in the early 18th century the terms were still virtually interchangeable.)

Mission and the crew now engage in a series of successful attacks on ships, taking as booty only what they need, then letting them go free. Episodes of chivalry and kindness alternate with courage and violence. Off the coast of Africa they capture a Dutch slaver; Mission makes another long speech to the crew, arguing “that the Trading for those of our own Species, cou'd never be agreeable to the Eyes of divine Justice. That no Man had Power of the Liberty of another; and while those who profess a more enlightened Knowledge of the Deity, sold Men like Beasts; they prov'd that their Religion was no more than a Grimace!” Mission goes on to say that he, for one, “had not exempted his Neck from the galling Yoak of Slavery, and asserted his own Liberty, to enslave others,” and he urges the sailors to accept the Africans as fellow crewmen-which they do.

Some time afterwards they settle down on the island of Johanna in the Indian Ocean, where Mission marries the daughter of “the local dusky queen,” and the crew also find wives. For a few years Mission continues to make speeches, rob ships, and occasionally-when forced by

circumstances-to slaughter his enemies. (As Lord Byron put it, Mission “was the mildest manner'd man/ That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.”) [Quoted by Gosse, 1924: 218]

Mission now decides on a venture in intentional community, and moves his people to Madagascar. [According to Course (1966), Libertatia was located near the NE tip of the island in Diego Suarez harbor or Antsirana.] Here they begin to construct a purely socialist society in which private property is abolished and all wealth held in a common treasury. No hedges separate the pirates' plots of land. Docks and fortifications are built, and two new ships, *Childhood* and *Liberty*, are sent to map the coast. A Session House is built, and Mission is elected “Lord Conservator” for a three-year term. The elected Assembly meets once a year, and nothing of moment can be undertaken without its approval. The laws are printed and distributed, as “they had some printers and letterformers among them.” The English pirate Capt. Tew is Admiral of the Fleet, Caraccioli is Secretary of State, and the Council consists of the ablest pirates “without distinction of nation or colour.” A *new language* is invented, a melange of French, English, Dutch, Portuguese, etc. This progressive regime fails to satisfy a few extreme radicals (including Capt. Tew), who break away to found their own settlement, based on pure anarchism—no laws, no officers. For a number of years (the Manuscript seems to have been vague about chronology) the Pirate Utopia flourished. When it finally fails it is not by fault of inner contradictions but of outside aggression: a tribe of unfriendly Natives attacks, the settlers put off to sea in their ships, and are destroyed by a freak hurricane.

Defoe himself lived during the last heyday of piracy, and much of his information derived from interviews with pirates imprisoned in London. A great many of his readers would have known a great deal about late 17th and early 18th century piracy, if only from news pamphlets and gallows ballads. As far as I can see, however, no contemporary reader ever questioned the reality of Capt. Mission. Despite the fact that Defoe's two chapters on Mission read like pages out of Rousseau-or Byron! (neither of whom were yet born)- and despite the fact that Libertatia's politics were in some ways far more radical than the politics of revolutionary America (1776) or France (1793)-or even Russia (1917), for that matter-despite all this, no one in 1728 blew the whistle on “Captain Johnson” or accused him of inventing Mission's story out of thin air. The material was believed, presumably, because it was *inherently believable*. Of course plenty of people believed in Lemuel Gulliver and Baron Munchhausen too; one cannot prove anything on the basis of popular belief; nevertheless, Capt. Mission was accepted as a fact until 1972.

In that year a new edition of the *General History* was prepared by Manuel Schonhorn (1972). In the introduction to this work, the reality of Capt. Mission was vigorously attacked on two main counts. First, negative evidence: no corroborating archival material exists (of course, it could have disappeared). Much more damning, however, was the problem of Capt. Tew. Plenty of archival and historical material exists on Tew, and there is no doubt of *his* existence-but the material shows that Tew could not have been in Madagascar long enough to carry out his role in the story of Libertatia. On this basis it was concluded that Mission's story is a *fiction*, a sort of Robinson Crusoe-type hoax, embedded in an otherwise historical (or more-or-less historical) text. The purpose of the hoax was to make radical Whig agit-prop. No “Mission MS” ever existed. Libertatia was a literal utopia: it was “nowhere”!

We must admit that the Tew problem casts the Mission narrative in a somewhat apocryphal light; however, I believe that the verdict of nonexistence is forced and over-hasty. Several other logical possibilities should be considered: (a) Mission existed and the Manuscript existed, but contained misinformation about Capt. Tew (perhaps the name Tew was used to mask someone

else), which Defoe uncritically accepted; (b) the Manuscript existed and described real events, but Defoe himself invented the episodes concerning Tew (including the “anarchist” schism) for reasons of his own, perhaps to flesh out a sparse narrative; © the Manuscript never existed, nor did any persons named Mission or Caraccioli-but some experiment like Libertatia actually occurred in Madagascar, and was thinly fictionalized by Defoe (Robinson Crusoe had a real-life model in Alexander Selkirk, a genuine castaway survivor). “Johnson” added the name of a real pirate, Tew, to pump up the verisimilitude of the text, failing to realize that he was thereby giving the game away to future historians. None of these hypotheses can be proven or disproven on the basis of the Tew problem. Therefore the Revisionist Debunking Hypothesis - complete fictionalization - must also remain unproven. The mere passion for debunking should not be allowed to push us into abandoning the solid historicity of a revolutionary hero or a real utopia. [See, for example, the preface to Burroughs, 1981; also Law, 1980] Ranter's Bay was real enough, and so were the “Kingdoms” carved out in Madagascar by the “halfbreed” children of the pirates. [See Deschamps, 1949, esp. pp. 215-229] The Buccaneers were real, and so were the wild crew at Nassau in the Bahamas (including Blackbeard, and “Calico Jack” Rackham and his two pirate wives, Ann Bonney and Mary Reade), which flourished for a few years in the early 1700's. Libertatia *could* have been real, and *should* have been real; this much will suffice for the admirers of Capt. Mission. Christopher Hill, for one, refuses to accept Mission as pure fiction. Hill points out that although Defoe was a fire-breathing radical as a youth, he had become a hack by the 1720's, and a supporter of bourgeois property values. “This is what makes the fairness of his description of Libertatia so remarkable. This would be surprising if he had invented the whole thing, less so if he had been listening to old sailors' tales and saw the possibility of using Libertatia to criticize aspects of capitalist society which offended him.” [op. cit., p. 179]

However, assuming for the sake of argument that the Mission chapters of the *General History* are at least as fictionalized as *Robinson Crusoe*, an interesting question arises. Defoe, it seems, knew rather a lot about the Republic of Sale. In the first few chapters of *Robinson Crusoe* the hero is captured by “Sally Rovers” and then taken to Morocco to be sold. As with St. Vincent de Paul and the Sieur Mouette Robinson discovers that his Moorish master is not such a bad chap: he offers the English sailor a chance to escape slavery by converting to Islam. Crusoe, however, decides to attempt escape, and eventually succeeds in stealing a small boat. He is accompanied by a winsome young Morisco boy, with whom he shares no language-a clear foreshadowing of Friday, the beloved companion. Defoe, it seems, could have used Sale as a partial model for Libertatia.

However, the comparison cannot be stretched too far. Sale was undoubtedly more libertarian than the Barbary Coast states of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, but it certainly had far more conventional structure than any of the pure Pirate Utopias. The pirates of Sale clearly decided to accept a republican form of government (and the 10% tax) in order to safeguard their liberties on a (hopefully) permanent basis; Sale can be seen as a sort of compromise.

It would appear that they did this deliberately and consciously, although without any ideological/ intellectual framework other than a hatred of European class oppression, and an admiration (or at least acceptance) of Islam. The so-called “democratic” aspects of Islam may have facilitated the emergence of Sale's unique experiment, but cannot fully account for it (since Islamic governments elsewhere were all monarchic). Protestant extremism (with its denial of all worldly “magistry” or government) may have been a factor-but not enough of a factor to save the Renegades from apostasy! Without any texts from Sale it's impossible to say for certain- but it looks



as if the Bou Regreg Republic might have been the direct creation of the Andalusian Moriscos and European Renegadoes, with (perhaps) a bit of inspiration from certain Sufis-a genuine act of spontaneous political genius.

When the Renegadoes disappeared, they left behind them no “issue”-no obvious permanent trace of their existence. In Madagascar the pirates’ “half-breed” children created a new culture, but in North Africa the converts and their descendants were simply absorbed into the general population. Their influence on European civilization seems to be nil, or even less than nothing: like relatives who have disgraced themselves, they are not mentioned-not just forgotten, but deliberately forgotten. They did nothing to shift the border of Islamdom toward the West despite their centuries of *jihad*. They created no distinctive art forms, and left behind not one page of “literature”. A few names, a few anecdotes of cruelty...the rest has vanished. Despite the sheer anomalous mystery of their existence-thousands of 17th century European converts to Islam!-they have received almost no attention from analytical or interpretive historians; they have aroused no curiosity amongst historians of religion; they have faded to insignificance, almost to invisibility.

Pirates, apostates, traitors, degenerates, heretics- what positive meaning could possibly be expected to emerge from such a dire combination? Must we simply confess to a fascination with the perverse? After all, this constitutes the real motive of the piratologist despite all protestations of shocked moral outrage, does it not? Not to mention the heresologist!

To answer this objection I would just point out (as indeed I’ve maintained elsewhere, e.g. Wilson, 1991, introduction) that heresy is a means of cultural transfer. When a religion from one culture penetrates another culture, it frequently does so (at least initially) as “heresy”; only later do the Orthodox Authorities arrive to straighten everyone out and make them toe the line. Thus, for example, early Celtic Christianity absorbed a great deal of Druidry, and was seen from Rome as “heretical”. In the process, not only was Christian culture introduced into Ireland, but Celtic culture was also introduced (more surreptitiously) into Christianity, or rather, into Christian European culture. A cultural transfer occurred, and this cross-cultural synergy added up to something new-something which produced (for instance) the Book of Kells. Spain during the Moorish Era represents a culture based on three-way transfers amongst Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions, especially in such “heretical” fields as alchemy (or poetry!). Alchemy as a “heresy” transferred Greek science into Renaissance Christendom, via Islam. And so on, and so forth.

Apostasy can be considered as a special case of “heresy”. And in the case of the Renegadoes, one very obvious area of cultural transfer consists of maritime technology. We can assume that not only did the Renegadoes introduce “round ships” and advanced metallurgy to Islamdom, they may also have introduced Islamic navigational mathematics and devices like the astrolabe to European mariners. This permeable boundary between “East” and “West” was most apparent in Moorish Spain, where mutual osmosis eventually generated a Columbus; and the process undoubtedly continued into the 17th century. We should be careful not to interpret this technical transfer as devoid of all spiritual significance- remember that Jewish Captain from Smyrna who was deemed a wizard for his navigational skills. The mariner’s trade was a mystery, and the sailor (like the desert nomad) a man of suspect orthodoxy.

We have speculated that 17th century mariners shared more than the secrets of a craft-they may have shared certain clandestine ideas as well: the idea of democracy, for example, or for that matter the idea of spiritual freedom, of freedom from “Christian Civilization” and all its

miseries. If Islamophiliac notions circulated amongst educated Masons, why not also amongst a 'masonry of poor mariners? From ship to ship in whispers a rumor was circulated, a tale of the Barbary Coast, where wealth and "Moorish nieces" were to be won by the brave-by those few free spirits bold enough to renounce Christianity. If we have no written record of this "conspiracy", we may also ask what documents ever emerge from an oral and non-literate (sub)culture? We need no texts because we have proof of conspiracy in the otherwise-inexplicable historical fact of thousands of conversions, not only voluntary but emphatic; we have the evidence, in fact, of mass apostasy.

Here then we are given an example not only of heresy as a means of cultural transfer, but also (and even more interesting) heresy as a means of social resistance. And it is here (as I've already implied) that I find the "meaning" of the Renegadoes and their lost world. It's true that this *theoria* or "vision" of the pirates must be suspect as a prolongation of my own particular subjectivity-and even as a "Romantic" prolongation, to be sure. But it's also true that no subjectivity is entirely unique. If I make bold to interpret the Renegadoes' experience, it's because in some sense I recognize it. Every history comprises in some degree a "history of the present" (as Foucault says), and perhaps even more so, a history of the self. But "every history" is not therefore to be deemed devoid of "objectivity" or to be merely subjective and romantic.

I think I recognize the Renegadoes because somehow they too are "present". When Col. Qaddafi and the Irish Republican Army are accused of collusion and gunrunning, would it be misleading to mention the old, old Atlantean connection between Celts and North Africans? Just as the European Consensus of the 17th century denounced such conspiracy as treason and apostasy, so our modern media dismiss it as "terrorism". We are not used to looking at history from the terrorist's point of view, that is, from the point of view of moral struggle and revolutionary expropriation. In our modern consensus view, the moral right of killing and stealing (war and taxes) belongs only to the State; even more specifically, to the rational, secular, corporate State. Those who are irrational enough to believe in religion (or revolution) as a reason for action in the world are "dangerous fanatics." Clearly not much has changed since the 1600's. On the one hand, we have society; on the other hand, resistance.

The 17th century knew no such thing as a secular ideology. Neither States nor individuals justified their actions by philosophical appeals to science, sociology, economics, "natural rights", or "dialectical materialism". Virtually all social constructs were predicated on religious values, or (at least) expressed in religious language. As for the ideology of Christian monarcho-imperialism—or for that matter the ideology of Islamic piracy—we are free to interpret both as mere window-dressing, hypocritical verbiage, sheer hypocrisy, or even hallucination; but this is to reduce history to a psychology of rape and plunder, devoid of all thought and intention. The influence of "ideas" on "history" remains problematical and even mysterious-especially when we hypostatize such vague complexities as categories or even as absolutes; but it does not follow from this that we can say nothing meaningful about ideas or about history. At the very least we must admit that ideas have histories.

History has tended to view the Renegadoes' story as meaningless, as a mere glitch in the smooth and inevitable progress of European culture toward world domination. The pirates were uneducated, poor, and marginalized-and hence (it is assumed) they could have had no real ideas or intentions. They are seen as insignificant particles swept away from the mainstream of history by a freakish eddy or swirl of exotic irrationality. Thousands of conversions to the faith of the Other mean nothing; centuries of resistance to European-Christian hegemony mean nothing.

Not one of the texts I've read on the subject even mentioned the possibility of intentionality and resistance, much less the notion of a "Pirate Utopia". The idea of the "positive shadow" of Islam is an ad hoc pro tem category I constructed in order to try to understand the enigma of apostasy; no historian (as far as I know) has ever posited a connection between the intellectual Islamophilia of Rosicrucianism and the Enlightenment, and the bizarre phenomenon of the Renegadoes. No one has ever interpreted their conversion to Islam as a kind of ultimate form of Ranterism, or even as a means of escape from (and revenge upon) a civilization of economic and sexual misery-from a smug Christianity based on slavery, repression, and elite privilege. Renegado apostasy as self-expression-mass apostasy as class expression-the Renegadoes as a kind of proto-proletarian "vanguard"-such concepts as these have no existence outside this book-and even I hesitate to advance them as anything more than quaint hypotheses. The "vanguard" failed, the Renegadoes vanished, and their incipient culture of resistance evaporated with them. But their experience was not meaningless, nor do they deserve to be buried in oblivion. Someone should salute their insurrectionary fervor, and their "temporary autonomous zone" on the banks of the Bou Regreg river in Morocco. Let this book serve as their monument; and through it let the Renegadoes re-enter the uneasy dreams of civilization.

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# Quantum Mechanics & Chaos Theory: Anarchist Meditations on N. Herbert's Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics

Hakim Bey

1. Scientific worldviews or “paradigms” can influence — or be influenced by — social reality. Clearly the Ptolemaic universe mirrors theocentric & monarchic structures. The Newtonian/Cartesian/mechanical universe mirrors rationalistic social assumptions, which in turn underlie nationalism, capitalism, communism, etc. As for Relativity Theory, it has only recently begun to reflect — or be reflected by — certain social realities. But these relations are still obscure, embedded in multinational conspiracies, the metaphysics of modern banking, international terrorism, & various newly emergent telecommunications-based technologies.
2. Which comes first, scientific paradigm or social structure? For our purpose it seems unnecessary to answer this question — and in any case, perhaps impossible. The relation between them is real, but acts in a manner infinitely more complex than mere cause-&-effect, or even warp-&-weft.
3. Quantum Mechanics (QM), considered as the source of such a paradigm, at first seems to lack any social ramifications or parallels, almost as if its very weirdness deprives it of all connections with “everyday” life or social reality. However, a few authors (like F. Capra, or Science-Fictioneers like R. Rucker or R. Anton Wilson) have seen Quantum Theory both as a vindication of certain “oriental philosophies” & also as prophetic of certain social changes which might loosely & carelessly be lumped under the heading “Aquarian.”
4. The “mystical” systems evoked by our contemplation of Quantum facts tend to be non-dualist and non-theocentric, dynamic rather than static: Advaita Vedanta, Taoism, Tantra (both Hindu & Buddhist), alchemy, etc. Einstein, who opposed Quantum theory, believed in a God who refused to play dice with the universe, a basically Judeo-Protestant deity who sets up a cosmic speed limit for light. The Quantum enthusiasts, by contrast, prefer a dancing Shiva, a principle of cosmic *play*.
5. Perhaps “oriental wisdom” will provide a kind of focusing device, or set of metaphors, or myth, or *poetics* of QM, which will allow it to realize itself fully as a “paradigm” & discover

its reflection on the level of society. But it does not follow that this paradigm will simply recapitulate the social complexes which gave rise to Taoism, Tantra or alchemy. There is no “Eternal Return” in the strict Nietzschean sense: each time the gyre comes round again it describes a new point in space/time.

6. Einstein accused Quantum Theory (QT) of restoring individual consciousness to the center of the universe, a position from which “Man” was toppled by “Science” 500 years ago. If QT can be accused of retrogression, however, it must be something like the anarchist P. Goodman’s “Stone Age Reaction” — a turning-back so extreme as to constitute a revolution.
7. Perhaps the development of QM and the rediscovery of “oriental wisdom” (with its occidental variations) stem from the same social causes, which have to do with information density, electronic technology, the ongoing collapse of Eurocentrism & its “Classical” philosophies, ideologies & physics. Perhaps the syncretism of QT & oriental wisdom will accelerate these changes, even help direct them.

#### 8. Table of Paradigms

With Their Spiritual, Political & Economic Parallels

- I. Paleolithic — shamanic — non-authoritarian — hunter/gatherer
  - II. Neolithic — polytheistic — authoritarian — agricultural
  - III. Earth-centered Cosmos — theistic — monarchical/theocratic (hierarchical) — urban
  - IV. Sun-centered Cosmos — monotheistic — divine right of kings — colonialism & imperialism
  - V. Mechanistic universe — deist or atheist — democracy, capitalism, communism — industrial/technological
  - VI. Relativistic universe — Modernism — cybernocracy — post-industrial (electronic)
  - VII. Quantum universe ...
9. Just as Modernism here parallels Relativity Theory as a sort of spiritual concomitant, so “oriental wisdom” seems to attach itself to QT. But what political systems, what economics would derive from this amalgamation?
  10. QT, which attempts an explanation of the reality “behind” Quantum facts, lags far behind QM itself. Unlike Relativity, QM offers no coherent ideas about “reality,” only a set of statistical possibilities, tools for prediction. QM “works” — but Quantum facts remain unexplained. The excitement of the science for non-scientists lies in the way it seems to have revived speculative philosophy as an integral part of the scientific endeavor: at present, competing theories about Quantum “reality” rival any occultist or mystical excesses for sheer madness & breathtaking incredibility. In *Quantum Reality*, physicist Nick Herbert outlines eight philosophies or world views, “Quantum Realities,” all based on Quantum fact but all different.
  11. Quantum Reality Number One (QRI) — the Copenhagen interpretation. “There is no deep reality.” Objects, everyday real things, “float on a world that is not as real.” (Bohr, Heisenberg.) Emphasis on “Uncertainty,” and thus comparable to Buddhist “Anti-realism” or even

Berkelean Idealism. The Copenhagen “orthodox ontology” leads directly to QR2, which posits an observer-created reality in which the act of measurement gives rise to observed reality (“The moon is demonstrably not there when no one looks” — N.D. Mermin).

12. QR3 — “Reality is an undivided wholeness.” Developed by W. Heitler. In this interpretation, “the observer appears, as a necessary part of the whole structure, and in his full capacity as a conscious being. The separation of the world into an ‘objective outside reality’ and ‘us,’ the self-conscious onlookers, can no longer be maintained. Object and subject have become inseparable from each other.” According to Bohm, “One is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts... The inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality.”
13. Capra’s popularization of this stance in *Tao of Physics* explores possible leads in Far Eastern mysticism. But none of the “orientalists” have so far noted a much more relevant metaphysics in sufism, especially Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of the oneness of being (*wahdat al-wujud*). My intuition says that Ibn Arabi might prove a goldmine to Quantum Theorists, but the “mingling of two oceans” conjured up by such an imagined confrontation would involve decades of hard labor to grasp & contain — & so I leave it to someone else to follow up.
14. Bell’s Theorem, which proves or seems to prove that Quantum Reality is “non-local,” bolsters rather than deflates what we might call the taoist theory of QM, or in Herbert’s phrase, QR3. *Something* in Bell’s Theorem seems to be violating Einstein’s cosmic speed limit — some superluminal aether or “field,” or Faster-Than-Light particles — or *telepathic* particles! So far this bizarre can be experimentally demonstrated only through negative inference; no laboratory “hard” evidence of such a “field” (or whatever) has been uncovered. Randomicity Theory suggests that non-local phenomena will remain inaccessible — that superluminal signaling devices (“ansibles” in SciFi terminology) will prove impossible to decode, hence useless. However, this remains unproven. If telepathy exists, then human consciousness may already be making use of such codes.
15. QR4 — “The many worlds interpretation” (H. Everett, 1957) suggests that the wave function never collapses — that every possible event actually occurs, either in “our” world or in some instantaneously created “alternative universe.” The Copenhagenists deny reality altogether; Everett offers infinite realities: an elegant solution, so far totally unverifiable ... but ... SciFi Heaven! (I wish to expropriate one of Everett’s notions, the non-collapse of the wave function, for my own fanciful synthesis [see below].)
16. QR5 — Quantum Logic. What Einstein did to Euclidean geometry, some Quantum physicist/mathematicians hope to do to Boolean (Classical) Logic. Other than making it easier to think about, I’m not sure how this new logic would relate to QR — but it sounds like a good idea.
17. QR6 — “Neo-realism.” Einstein, Planck, Schrodinger, Bohm & de Broglie have all looked for ways to “save the phenomena,” to discover & describe Quantum Reality *per se*, rather than take the disagreeable step of agreeing with Copenhagenian anti-realisms (“Atoms are not things” — Heisenberg. “There is no quantum world” — Bohr.) Reconciling the neo-realist

project with Quantum facts leads to some very peculiar positions such as maintaining that the world is real but “non-local.”

18. Could it be that the quarrel between anti-realists & neo-realists arises from a *semantic* problem about the definition of “reality?” It looks to me as if both sides are maintaining that reality means *Classical* reality. Thus the Copenhagenists are forced to deny that ordinary objects exist — an absurdity — while the neo-realists are reduced to looking for loopholes in QM, & seem so far to have been utterly frustrated. But if QR & “ordinary reality” are *both* real, modalities of the same one reality, then the dichotomy vanishes like a delusion caused by bad grammar. The only problem then remaining is that of Quantum measurement, which asks in effect how “quantumstuff” “*becomes*” “ordinary objects?”
19. QR7 — “Consciousness creates reality.” Von Neumann posits that only one kind of stuff exists, quantumstuff, & that ordinary objects are “made” of it. At some point the wave function, the all-possible nature of quantumstuff, “collapses” into a single statistical probability, a quantum jump which somehow “creates the world.” Where does this occur? The only logical answer appears to implicate human consciousness as the setting of the wave function collapse. Ironical that Von Neumann, the wizard of cybernetics & strategic game theory, should have been forced to develop a math which suggests that human consciousness must be written into any complete explanation of QR. Von Neumann’s interpretation is not the same as QR2, “observer-created reality,” in which the observer could as easily be a measuring device as a human being; QR2 tacitly accepts a basic dualism between a real “Classical” measuring device, and Quantum unreality itself. Nor does QR7 necessarily imply Buddhist-style anti-realism or Idealism: reality *exists*, but only in conjunction or “unity” with consciousness.
20. On one hand this trend leads to a kind of neo-Aristotelian neo-Platonism — such as QR8, Heisenberg’s “duplex world” of potentials and actualities, in which real objects appear almost as manifestations or hypostases of a Quantum Reality which is both more abstract & yet “more real” than everyday things.
21. On the other hand however Von N’s “all-quantum” explanation of QR harks back to & strengthens the “taoist” arguments of QR3. Here, rather than a platonic modified non-dualism we get a strong & *radical* monism, in which “matter” & “consciousness” cannot be distinguished except as modalities of a single reality.
22. In effect, might one not say (as in QR4) that *the wave function never collapses* — but that there still remains *only one reality*? That there has never been a “fall” from *one* into *two*? If QR is non-local, if “phase interference” & Bell’s proof mean that all Quantum-particles which connect hologrammatical instantaneous connections with each other — if all “matter” was originally (before the Big Bang) one dimensionless macro-particle/wave — then all particles are implicated in all waves, & vice versa. The universe is (as Capra says, quoting Hindu sources) a seamless net of jewels, every jewel reflected in every other. The wave function collapse in this case would constitute a mathematical description of a mode of individual consciousness & its awareness of the world, its inherent implicatedness in the totality & oneness of that world — in fact, its virtual identity with that world. The wave



function collapse would then not actually describe a physical event at all; in effect, it would have never happened. The universe is now what it was & ever shall be: one reality.

23. As far as I know, this synthesis of QR3 and QR7 (lucky numbers!) violates current thinking in Quantum Theory — & perhaps even the “Quantum facts” as well. Still ... science marches on; things may change & become even weirder. I have a strong hunch that the ongoing study of randomness (e.g. at thermonuclear temperatures) may shed light on QR philosophy in the near future. Another source for the next breakthrough in physics may well come from brain physiology — provided it can tear itself away from rat-running & linguistic rat-holes & address itself to the problem of *consciousness*. New work on the “morphogenetic field” in biology looks promising; personally, I feel less enthusiasm for cognitive philosophy & AI research.
24. My groping attempt at a synthesis is suggested by what I call Chaos Theory, which holds to the axiom that reality itself subsists in a state of ontological anarchy. “The one gave birth to the two, the two to the 10,000 things” — but all this IS the tao & nothing but the tao. Yin & yang have no being in themselves, but act as interpenetrating modalities of the tao. The real/unreal dichotomy enslaves us in false consciousness. Looked at from one point of view, nothing is real; from another point of view, everything is real; from another, “nothing is real except the Real”; from yet another, “I am the Real” (*ana’I Haqq*, a sufi “koan”). These semanticks create a set of paradoxes — and the resolution will give us an essentially metalinguistic certainty of being’s oneness. Such oneness cannot be structured or defined in any way. It has no “ruler” and no “laws” — hence, ontological anarchy.
25. On a mathematical (or statistical) level, the chaotic nature of reality may manifest as randomness; I suspect it manifests in the Uncertainty Principle as well. Whatever the truth of these speculations, I feel that Chaos Theory & Quantum Theory are moving closer & closer together. If this is so, then we may be able to predict some social implications of Quantum Theory as a “paradigm” — and thus answer the questions posed in paragraph nine — by looking at the social programme of Chaos Theory or ontological anarchy.
26. Chaos Theory, like any good theory, can be applied to anything, from physics to literary criticism — just as it can absorb energy from any kind of source, from the heretical spiritual teachings of sufis, Ismailis, Ranters, shamans or sorcerers — to QM itself. Thus it may provide the link, yoke, nexus or connection between QM & “oriental wisdom,” & help define the paradigm we’re looking for.
27. Chaos Theory predicts that Quantum Theory will fail to turn up any “hidden laws,” hidden variables that restore some privileged class of objects or perceptions to a status of objective reality at the expense of other objects & perceptions. The anti-realists who recognize only the measuring device as real, & the neo-realists who yearn for a “Classical” resolution of QM’s paradoxes, are simply proposing different ways of “saving the phenomena” — or metaphorically, of preserving reality as we know it. *Consensus Reality*. This project seems doomed from the start — at least, to us chaotes. The new paradigm will shatter Consensus Reality, & with it all authoritative representatives of scientific “truth.”

28. This is not to claim that the “solving” of Quantum Theory will somehow result in an anarchist Utopia. The predictive power of Chaos Theory seems to falter here. After all, total destruction is as much a “type” of chaos as the most benign visions of Bakunin or Stirner. In effect the social & economic results of the new paradigm depend on forces other than those described or controlled by the paradigm, whatever its claims to absoluteness. For instance, an economy which mirrors this paradigm will almost certainly involve the abolition of “work” as we know it (a relic of Classical physics) — but what replaces it may either enslave us more miserably than “work” could ever accomplish, or it may liberate us in harmony with the visions of “zero-work” radicals, neo-situationists & anarchists.
29. Similarly Chaos Theory can make no predictions about the development of technologies which mirror the paradigm, such as telepathic signaling, FTL spaceships, ansibles, controlled ESP or other fancies indulged in by fantasists (including me). Social change resists all such sibylline seductions, since it involves the incalculability of consciousness itself, & of human history. I can foresee Quantum dystopias as easily as Utopias.
30. Given all these caveats however. Chaos Theory still envisions a Quantum-Social-Paradigm with distinctly anti-authoritarian implications — in one sense a reprise of the Paleolithic/shamanic worldview, in another sense wildly post-postmodern. Such a “movement” or change would transcend all current definitions of Anarchism, whether communist, syndicalist, libertarian-capitalist or individualist. So far there is no name for what I’m talking about.
31. Like Quantum Theory itself, this politique/poetique is still *emergent*. It can only be sensed as it emerges or begins to emerge from the “facts” of everyday life, just as Quantum Theory peeps out of the strangeness of Quantum facts. Somewhere in the welter of Quantum Theory & Chaos Theory the paradigm is already bom, & waits for us to assist at the mystery of its naming, of its transmutation from potentiality to actuality. In this action poets & physicists may play equal parts, for the glory of Quantum Theory is that by restoring consciousness to its theorems it has turned science once again into a type of “Natural Philosophy” — or alchemy.
32. Fleshing out the vision of a world somehow based on the mind-boggling perceptions of QM linked with the alien realizations of “oriental wisdom” — a world which lives with ideas such as non-locality, particles which travel backwards in time, alternative universes, randomness at the heart of creation, etc. etc... this is properly the work of Utopian Science Fiction — at this point in history. Perhaps within a few years it will become the province of revolutionaries, artists, philosophers — the unacknowledged legislators of a lawless future — anarchs of the new paradigm.
33. QM is said to be “complete” — but then so are all scientific systems in their moment of power. QM should by no means be fetishized either by scientists or poets, since Quantum Theory itself may hold the seeds of a paradigm which overthrows even QM. The tao which can be spoken is not the tao; the moment Quantum Theory presents itself as “complete,” it must be at once attacked. Chaos theory *seems* to predict that Quantum Theory will flourish as long as it remains “incomplete,” not tied down on any Classical (or even non-Boolean)

procrustean beds-metallogical, metalinguistic, essentially unstructured — “free,” like reality itself — which is a state not of Anarchism but of *anarchy*, even to the very roots of being.

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Hakim Bey  
Quantum Mechanics & Chaos Theory: Anarchist Meditations on N. Herbert's Quantum Reality:  
Beyond the New Physics

Retrieved on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 from [www.hermetic.com](http://www.hermetic.com)

[en.anarchistlibraries.net](http://en.anarchistlibraries.net)

# **T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism**

Hakim Bey

1985

# Contents

Acknowledgments . . . . .	5
<b>Chaos: The Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism</b>	<b>6</b>
Chaos	8
Poetic Terrorism	9
Amour Fou	10
Wild Children	11
Paganism	13
Art Sabotage	14
The Assassins	15
Pyrotechnics	16
Chaos Myths	17
Pornography	20
Crime	22
Sorcery	23
Advertisement	24
<b>Communiques of the Association for Ontological Anarchy</b>	<b>25</b>
Communique #1 (spring 1986)	26
I. Slogans & Mottos for Subway Graffiti & Other Purposes . . . . .	26
II. Some Poetic-Terrorist Ideas Still Sadly Languishing in the Realm of “Conceptual Art”	26
Communique #2: The Kallikak Memorial Bolo & Chaos Ashram: A Proposal	28
Communique #3: Haymarket Issue	30

Communique #4: The End of the World	31
Communique #5: “Intellectual S/M Is the Fascism of the Eighties — The Avant-Garde Eats Shit and Likes It”	33
Communique #6	35
I. Salon Apocalypse: “Secret Theater” . . . . .	35
II. Murder — War — Famine — Greed . . . . .	36
Communique #7: Psychic Paleolithism & High Technology: A Position Paper	38
Communique #8: Chaos Theory & the Nuclear Family	41
Communique #9: Double-Dip Denunciations	42
I. Xtianity . . . . .	42
II. Abortionists & Anti-abortionists . . . . .	42
Communique #10: Plenary Session Issues New Denunciations — Purges Expected	44
Communique #11: Special Holiday Season Food Issue Rant: Turn Off the Lite!	46
Special Halloween Communique: Black Magic as Revolutionary Action	48
Special communique: A.O.A. Announces Purges in Chaos Movement	50
Post-Anarchism Anarchy	51
Black Crown & Black Rose: Anarcho-Monarchism & Anarcho-Mysticism	54
Instructions for the Kali Yuga	59
Against the Reproduction of Death	61
Ringling Denunciation of Surrealism	63
For a Congress of Weird Religions	65
Hollow Earth	68
Nietzsche & the Dervishes	70
Resolution for the 1990’s: Boycott Cop Culture!!!	72
The Temporary Autonomous Zone	75
Pirate Utopias	77
Waiting for the Revolution	79

The Psychotopology of Everyday Life	81
The Net and the Web	85
“Gone to Croatan”	90
Music as an Organizational Principle	95
The Will to Power as Disappearance	98
Ratholes in the Babylon of Information	101
 Appendix	 103
Appendix A: Chaos Linguistics	104
Appendix B: Applied Hedonics	106
Appendix C: Extra Quotes	107
Pirate Rant . . . . .	108
The Dinner Party . . . . .	108



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# **Chaos: The Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism**

(Dedicated to Ustad Mahmud Ali Abd al-Khabir)

# Chaos

Chaos never died. Primordial uncarved block, sole worshipful monster, inert & spontaneous, more ultraviolet than any mythology (like the shadows before Babylon), the original undifferentiated oneness-of-being still radiates serene as the black pennants of Assassins, random & perpetually intoxicated.

Chaos comes before all principles of order & entropy, it's neither a god nor a maggot, its idiotic desires encompass & define every possible choreography, all meaningless aethers & phlogistons: its masks are crystallizations of its own facelessness, like clouds.

Everything in nature is perfectly real including consciousness, there's absolutely nothing to worry about. Not only have the chains of the Law been broken, they never existed; demons never guarded the stars, the Empire never got started, Eros never grew a beard.

No, listen, what happened was this: they lied to you, sold you ideas of good & evil, gave you distrust of your body & shame for your prophethood of chaos, invented words of disgust for your molecular love, mesmerized you with inattention, bored you with civilization & all its usurious emotions.

There is no becoming, no revolution, no struggle, no path; already you're the monarch of your own skin — your inviolable freedom waits to be completed only by the love of other monarchs: a politics of dream, urgent as the blueness of sky.

To shed all the illusory rights & hesitations of history demands the economy of some legendary Stone Age — shamans not priests, bards not lords, hunters not police, gatherers of paleolithic laziness, gentle as blood, going naked for a sign or painted as birds, poised on the wave of explicit presence, the clockless nowever.

Agents of chaos cast burning glances at anything or anyone capable of bearing witness to their condition, their fever of *lux et voluptas*. I am awake only in what I love & desire to the point of terror — everything else is just shrouded furniture, quotidian anaesthesia, shit-for-brains, sub-reptilian ennui of totalitarian regimes, banal censorship & useless pain.

Avatars of chaos act as spies, saboteurs, criminals of amour fou, neither selfless nor selfish, accessible as children, mannered as barbarians, chafed with obsessions, unemployed, sensually deranged, wolfangels, mirrors for contemplation, eyes like flowers, pirates of all signs & meanings.

Here we are crawling the cracks between walls of church state school & factory, all the paranoid monoliths. Cut off from the tribe by feral nostalgia we tunnel after lost words, imaginary bombs.

The last possible *deed* is that which defines perception itself, an invisible golden cord that connects us: illegal dancing in the courthouse corridors. If I were to kiss you here they'd call it an act of terrorism — so let's take our pistols to bed & wake up the city at midnight like drunken bandits celebrating with a fusillade, the message of the taste of chaos.

# Poetic Terrorism

Weird dancing in all-night computer-banking lobbies. Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays. Land-art, earth-works as bizarre alien artifacts strewn in State Parks. Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-Terrorist objects. Kidnap someone & make them happy. Pick someone at random & convince them they're the heir to an enormous, useless & amazing fortune — say 5000 square miles of Antarctica, or an aging circus elephant, or an orphanage in Bombay, or a collection of alchemical mss. Later they will come to realize that for a few moments they believed in something extraordinary, & will perhaps be driven as a result to seek out some more intense mode of existence.

Bolt up brass commemorative plaques in places (public or private) where you have experienced a revelation or had a particularly fulfilling sexual experience, etc.

Go naked for a sign.

Organize a strike in your school or workplace on the grounds that it does not satisfy your need for indolence & spiritual beauty.

Graffiti-art loaned some grace to ugly subways & rigid public monuments — PT-art can also be created for public places: poems scrawled in courthouse lavatories, small fetishes abandoned in parks & restaurants, xerox-art under windshield-wipers of parked cars, Big Character Slogans pasted on playground walls, anonymous letters mailed to random or chosen recipients (mail fraud), pirate radio transmissions, wet cement...

The audience reaction or aesthetic-shock produced by PT ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror — powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dada-esque angst — no matter whether the PT is aimed at one person or many, no matter whether it is “signed” or anonymous, if it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails.

PT is an act in a Theater of Cruelty which has no stage, no rows of seats, no tickets & no walls. In order to work at all, PT must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media). Even the guerilla Situationist tactics of street theater are perhaps too well known & expected now.

An exquisite seduction carried out not only in the cause of mutual satisfaction but also as a conscious act in a deliberately beautiful life — may be the ultimate PT. The PTerrorist behaves like a confidence-trickster whose aim is not money but CHANGE.

Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art. Avoid recognizable art-categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental; be ruthless, take risks, vandalize only what *must* be defaced, do something children will remember all their lives — but don't be spontaneous unless the PT Muse has possessed you.

Dress up. Leave a false name. Be legendary. The best PT is against the law, but don't get caught. Art as crime; crime as art.

# Amour Fou

Amour fou is not a Social Democracy, it is not a Parliament of Two. The minutes of its secret meetings deal with meanings too enormous but too precise for prose. Not this, not that — its Book of Emblems trembles in your hand.

Naturally it shits on schoolmasters & police, but it sneers at liberationists & ideologues as well — it is not a clean well-lit room. A topological charlatan laid out its corridors & abandoned parks, its ambush-decor of luminous black & membranous maniacal red.

Each of us owns half the map — like two renaissance potentates we define a new culture with our anathematized mingling of bodies, merging of liquids — the Imaginal seams of our City-state blur in our sweat.

Ontological anarchism never came back from its last fishing trip. So long as no one squeals to the FBI, CHAOS cares nothing for the future of civilization. Amour fou breeds only by accident — its primary goal is ingestion of the Galaxy. A conspiracy of transmutation.

Its only concern for the Family lies in the possibility of incest (“Grow your own!” “Every human a Pharaoh!”) — O most sincere of readers, my semblance, my brother/sister! — & in the masturbation of a child it finds concealed (like a japanese-paper-flower-pill) the image of the crumbling of the State.

Words belong to those who use them only till someone else steals them back. The Surrealists disgraced themselves by selling amour fou to the ghost-machine of Abstraction — they sought in their unconsciousness only power over others, & in this they followed de Sade (who wanted “freedom” only for grown-up whitemen to eviscerate women & children).

Amour fou is saturated with its own aesthetic, it fills itself to the borders of itself with the trajectories of its own gestures, it runs on angels’ clocks, it is not a fit fate for commissars & shopkeepers. Its ego evaporates in the mutability of desire, its communal spirit withers in the selfishness of obsession.

Amour fou involves non-ordinary sexuality the way sorcery demands non-ordinary consciousness. The anglo-saxon post-Protestant world channels all its suppressed sensuality into advertising & splits itself into clashing mobs: hysterical prudes vs promiscuous clones & former-ex-singles. AF doesn’t want to join anyone’s army, it takes no part in the Gender Wars, it is bored by equal opportunity employment (in fact it refuses to work for a living), it doesn’t complain, doesn’t explain, never votes & never pays taxes.

AF would like to see every bastard (“lovechild”) come to term & birthed — AF thrives on anti-entropic devices — AF loves to be molested by children — AF is better than prayer, better than sinsemilla — AF takes its own palmtrees & moon wherever it goes. AF admires tropicalismo, sabotage, break-dancing, Layla & Majnun, the smells of gunpowder & sperm.

AF is always illegal, whether it’s disguised as a marriage or a boyscout troop — always drunk, whether on the wine of its own secretions or the smoke of its own polymorphous virtues. It is not the derangement of the senses but rather their apotheosis — not the result of freedom but rather its precondition. *Lux et voluptas*.

# Wild Children

The full moon's unfathomable light-path — mid-May midnight in some State that starts with "I," so two-dimensional it can scarcely be said to possess any geography at all — the beams so urgent & tangible you must draw the shades in order to think in words.

No question of *writing to* Wild Children. They think in images — prose is for them a code not yet fully digested & ossified, just as for us never fully trusted.

You may write *about* them, so that others who have lost the silver chain may follow. Or write *for* them, making of STORY & EMBLEM a process of seduction into your own paleolithic memories, a barbaric enticement to liberty (chaos as CHAOS understands it).

For this otherworld species or "third sex," *les enfants sauvages*, fancy & Imagination are still undifferentiated. Unbridled PLAY: at one & the same time the source of our Art & of all the race's rarest eros.

To embrace disorder both as wellspring of style & voluptuous storehouse, a fundamental of our alien & occult civilization, our conspiratorial esthetic, our lunatic espionage — this is the action (let's face it) either of an artist of some sort, or of a tenor thirteen-year-old.

Children whose clarified senses betray them into a brilliant sorcery of beautiful pleasure reflect something feral & smutty in the nature of reality itself: natural ontological anarchists, angels of chaos — their gestures & body odors broadcast around them a jungle of presence, a forest of prescience complete with snakes, ninja weapons, turtles, futuristic shamanism, incredible mess, piss, ghosts, sunlight, jerking off, birds' nests & eggs — gleeful aggression against the groan-ups of those Lower Planes so powerless to englobe either destructive epiphanies or creation in the form of antics fragile but sharp enough to slice moonlight.

And yet the denizens of these inferior jerkwater dimensions truly believe they control the destinies of Wild Children — & *down here*, such vicious beliefs actually sculpt most of the substance of happenstance.

The only ones who actually wish to *share* the mischievous destiny of those savage runaways or minor guerillas rather than dictate it, the only ones who can understand that cherishing & unleashing are the *same* act — these are mostly artists, anarchists, perverts, heretics, a band apart (as much from each other as from the world) or able to meet only as wild children might, locking gazes across a dinnertable while adults gibber from behind their masks.

Too young for Harley choppers — flunk-outs, break-dancers, scarcely pubescent poets of flat lost railroad towns — a million sparks falling from the skyrocketers of Rimbaud & Mowgli — slender terrorists whose gaudy bombs are compacted of polymorphous love & the precious shards of popular culture — punk gunslingers dreaming of piercing their ears, animist bicyclists gliding in the pewter dusk through Welfare streets of accidental flowers — out-of-season gypsy skinny-dippers, smiling sideways-glancing thieves of power-totems, small change & panther-bladed knives — we sense them everywhere — we publish this offer to trade the corruption of our own *lux et gaudium* for their perfect gentle filth.

So get this: our realization, our liberation depends on *theirs* — not because we ape the Family, those “misers of love” who hold hostages for a banal future, nor the State which schools us all to sink beneath the event-horizon of a tedious “usefulness” — no — but because *we & they*, the wild ones, are images of each other, linked & bordered by that silver chain which defines the pale of sensuality, transgression & vision.

We share the same enemies & our means of triumphant escape are also the same: a delirious & obsessive *play*, powered by the spectral brilliance of the wolves & their children.



# Paganism

Constellations by which to steer the barque of the soul. “If the moslem understood Islam he would become an idol-worshipper.” — Mahmud Shabestari Eleggua, ugly opener of doors with a hook in his head & cowrie shells for eyes, black santeria cigar & glass of rum — same as Ganesh, elephant-head fat boy of Beginnings who rides a mouse. The organ which senses the numinous atrophies with the senses. Those who cannot feel baraka cannot know the caress of the world.

Hermes Poimandres taught the animation of eidolons, the magic in-dwelling of icons by spirits — but those who cannot perform this rite on themselves & on the whole palpable fabric of material being will inherit only blues, rubbish, decay.

The pagan body becomes a Court of Angels who all perceive this place — this very grove — as paradise (“If there is a paradise, surely it is *here!*” — inscription on a Mughal garden gate)..

But ontological anarchism is too paleolithic for eschatology — things are real, sorcery works, bush-spirits one with the Imagination, death an unpleasant vagueness — the plot of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* — an epic of mutability. The personal mythscape.

Paganism has not yet invented laws — only virtues. No priestcraft, no theology or metaphysics or morality — but a universal shamanism in which no one attains real humanity without a vision.

Food money sex sleep sun sand & sinsemilla — love truth peace freedom & justice. Beauty. Dionysus the drunk boy on a panther — rank adolescent sweat — Pan goatman slogs through the solid earth up to his waist as if it were the sea, his skin crusted with moss & lichen — Eros multiplies himself into a dozen pastoral naked Iowa farm boys with muddy feet & pond-scum on their thighs.

Raven, the potlatch trickster, sometimes a boy, old woman, bird who stole the Moon, pine needles floating on a pond, Heckle/Jeckle totempole-head, chorus-line of crows with silver eyes dancing on the woodpile — same as Semar the hunchback albino hermaphrodite shadow-puppet patron of the Javanese revolution.

Yemaya, bluestar sea-goddess & patroness of queers — same as Tara, bluegrey aspect of Kali, necklace of skulls, dancing on Shiva’s stiff lingam, licking monsoon clouds with her yard-long tongue — same as Loro Kidul, jasper-green Javanese sea-goddess who bestows the power of invulnerability on sultans by tantrik intercourse in magic towers & caves.

From one point of view ontological anarchism is extremely bare, stripped of all qualities & possessions, poor as CHAOS itself — but from another point of view it pullulates with baroque-ness like the Fucking-Temples of Kathmandu or an alchemical emblem book — it sprawls on its divan eating loukoum & entertaining heretical notions, one hand inside its baggy trousers.

The hulls of its pirate ships are lacquered black, the lateen sails are red, black banners with the device of a winged hourglass.

A South China Sea of the mind, off a jungle-flat coast of palms, rotten gold temples to unknown bestial gods, island after island, the breeze like wet yellow silk on naked skin, navigating by pantheistic stars, hierophany on hierophany, light upon light against the luminous & chaotic dark.

# Art Sabotage

Art sabotage strives to be perfectly exemplary but at the same time retain an element of opacity — not propaganda but aesthetic shock — apallingly direct yet also subtly angled — action-as-metaphor.

Art Sabotage is the dark side of Poetic Terrorism — creation-through-destruction — but it cannot serve any Party, nor any nihilism, nor even art itself. Just as the banishment of illusion enhances awareness, so the demolition of aesthetic blight sweetens the air of the world of discourse, of the Other. Art Sabotage serves only consciousness, attentiveness, awakens.

A-S goes beyond paranoia, beyond deconstruction — the ultimate criticism — physical attack on offensive art — aesthetic jihad. The slightest taint of petty ego-icity or even of personal taste spoils its purity & vitiates its force. A-S can never seek power — only *release* it.

Individual artworks (even the worst) are largely irrelevant — A-S seeks to damage institutions which use art to diminish consciousness & profit by delusion. This or that poet or painter cannot be condemned for lack of vision — but malign Ideas can be assaulted through the artifacts they generate. MUZAK is designed to hypnotize & control — its machinery can be smashed.

Public book burnings — why should rednecks & Customs officials monopolize this weapon? Novels about children possessed by demons; the *New York Times* bestseller list; feminist tracts against pornography; schoolbooks (especially Social Studies, Civics, Health); piles of *New York Post*, *Village Voice* & other supermarket papers; choice gleanings of Xtian publishers; a few Harlequin Romances — a festive atmosphere, wine-bottles & joints passed around on a clear autumn afternoon.

To throw money away at the Stock Exchange was pretty decent Poetic Terrorism — but to *destroy* the money would have been good Art Sabotage. To seize TV transmission & broadcast a few pirated minutes of incendiary Chaote art would constitute a feat of PT — but simply to blow up the transmission tower would be perfectly adequate Art Sabotage. If certain galleries & museums deserve an occasional brick through their windows — not destruction, but a jolt to complacency — then what about BANKS? Galleries turn beauty into a commodity but banks transmute Imagination into feces and debt. Wouldn't the world gain a degree of beauty with each bank that could be made to tremble...or fall? But how? Art Sabotage should probably stay away from politics (it's so boring) — but not from banks.

Don't picket — vandalize. Don't protest — deface. When ugliness, poor design & stupid waste are forced upon you, turn Luddite, throw your shoe in the works, retaliate. Smash the symbols of the Empire in the name of nothing but the heart's longing for grace.

# The Assassins

Across the luster of the desert & into the polychrome hills, hairless & ochre violet dun & umber, at the top of a dessicate blue valley travelers find an artificial oasis, a fortified castle in saracenic style enclosing a hidden garden.

As guests of the Old Man of the Mountain Hassan-i Sabbah they climb rock-cut steps to the castle. Here the Day of Resurrection has already come & gone — those within live outside profane Time, which they hold at bay with daggers & poisons.

Behind crenellations & slit-windowed towers scholars & fedayeen wake in narrow monolithic cells. Star-maps, astrolabes, alembics & retorts, piles of open books in a shaft of morning sunlight — an unsheathed scimitar.

Each of those who enter the realm of the *Imam-of-one's-own-being* becomes a sultan of inverted revelation, a monarch of abrogation & apostasy. In a central chamber scalloped with light and hung with tapestried arabesques they lean on bolsters & smoke long chibouks of haschisch scented with opium & amber.

For them the hierarchy of being has compacted to a dimensionless punctum of the real — for them the chains of Law have been broken — they end their fasting with wine. For them the outside of everything is its inside, its true face shines through direct. But the garden gates are camouflaged with terrorism, mirrors, rumors of assassination, trompe l'oeil, legends.

Pomegranate, mulberry, persimmon, the erotic melancholy of cypresses, membrane-pink shirazi roses, braziers of meccan aloes & benzoin, stiff shafts of ottoman tulips, carpets spread like make-believe gardens on actual lawns — a pavilion set with a mosaic of calligrammes — a willow, a stream with watercress — a fountain crystallised underneath with geometry — the metaphysical scandal of bathing odalisques, of wet brown cupbearers hide-&-seeking in the foliage — “water, greenery, beautiful faces.”

By night Hassan-i Sabbah like a civilized wolf in a turban stretches out on a parapet above the garden & glares at the sky, conning the asterisms of heresy in the mindless cool desert air. True, in this myth some aspirant disciples may be ordered to fling themselves off the ramparts into the black — but also true that some of them will learn to fly like sorcerers.

The emblem of Alamut holds in the mind, a *mandals* or magic circle lost to history but embedded or imprinted in consciousness. The Old Man flits like a ghost into tents of kings & bedrooms of theologians, past all locks & guards with forgotten moslem/ninja techniques, leaves behind bad dreams, stilettos on pillows, puissant bribes.

The attar of his propaganda seeps into the criminal dreams of ontological anarchism, the heraldry of our obsessions displays the luminous black outlaw banners of the Assassins...all of them pretenders to the throne of an Imaginal Egypt, an occult space/light continuum consumed by still-unimagined liberties.

# Pyrotechnics

Invented by the chinese but never developed for war — a fine example of Poetic Terrorism — a weapon used to trigger aesthetic shock rather than kill — the Chinese hated war & used to go into mourning when armies were raised — gunpowder more useful to frighten malign demons, delight children, fill the air with brave & risky-smelling haze.

Class C Thunder Bombs from Kwantung, bottlerockets, butterflies, M-80's, sunflowers, "A Forest In Springtime" — revolution weather — light your cigarette from the sizzling fuse of a Haymarket-black bomb — imagine the air full of lamiae & succubi, oppressive spirits, police-ghosts. Call some kid with a smouldering punk or kitchen match — shaman-apostle of summer gunpowder plots — shatter the heavy night with pinched stars & pumped stars, arsenic & antimony, sodium & calomel, a blitz of magnesium & shrill picrate of potash.

Spur-fire (lampblack & saltpetre) portfire & iron filings — attack your local bank or ugly church with roman candles & purple-gold skyrockets, impromptu & anonymous (perhaps launch from back of pick-up truck..)

Build frame-lattice lancework set-pieces on the roofs of insurance buildings or schools — a kundalini-snake or Chaos-dragon coiled barium-green against a background of sodium-oxalate yellow — Don't Tread On Me — or copulating monsters shooting wads of jizm-fire at a Baptists old folks home.

Cloud-sculpture, smoke sculpture & flags = Air Art. Earthworks. Fountains = Water Art. And Fireworks. Don't perform with Rockefeller grants & police permits for audiences of culture-lovers. Evanescent incendiary mind-bombs, scary mandalas flaring up on smug suburban nights, alien green thunderheads of emotional plague blasted by orgone-blue vajra-rays of lasered *feux d'artifice*.

Comets that explode with the odor of hashish & radioactive charcoal — swampghouls & will-o'-the-wisps haunting public parks — fake St. Elmo's fire flickering over the architecture of the bourgeoisie — strings of lady-fingers falling on the Legislature floor — salamander-elementals attack well-known moral reformers.

Blazing shellac, sugar of milk, strontium, pitch, gum water, gerbs of chinese fire — for a few moments the air is ozone-sharp — drifting opal cloud of pungent dragon/phoenix smoke. For an instant the Empire falls, its princes & governors flee to their stygian muck, plumes of sulphur from elf-flamethrowers burning their pinched asses as they retreat. The Assassin-child, psyche of fire, holds sway for one brief dogstar-hot night.

# Chaos Myths

Unseen Chaos (po-te-kitea)

Unpossessed, Unpassing

Chaos of utter darkness

Untouched & untouchable

— *Maori Chant*

Chaos perches on a sky-mountain: a huge bird like a yellow bag or red fireball, with six feet & four wings — has no face but dances & sings.

Or Chaos is a black longhaired dog, blind & deaf, lacking the five viscera.

Chaos the Abyss comes first, then Earth/Gaia, then Desire/Eros. From these three proceed two pairs — Erebus & old Night, Aether & Daylight. Neither Being nor Non-being

neither air nor earth nor space:

what was enclosed? where? under whose protection?

What was water, deep, unfathomable?

Neither death nor immortality, day nor night —

but ONE breathed by itself with no wind.

Nothing else. Darkness swathed in darkness,

unmanifest water.

The ONE, hidden by void,

felt the generation of heat, came into being

as Desire, first seed of Mind...

Was there an up or down?

There were casters of seed, there were powers:

energy underneath, impulse above.

But who knows for sure?

— *Rg Veda*

Tiamat the Chaos-Ocean slowly drops from her womb Silt & Slime, the Horizons, Sky and watery Wisdom. These offspring grow noisy & bumptious — she considers their destruction.

But Marduk the wargod of Babylon rises in rebellion against the Old Hag & her Chaos-monsters, chthonic totems — Worm, Female Ogre, Great Lion, Mad Dog, Scorpion Man, Howling Storm — dragons wearing their glory like gods — & Tiamat herself a great sea-serpent.

Marduk accuses her of causing sons to rebel against fathers — she loves Mist & Cloud, principles of disorder. Marduk will be the first to rule, to invent government. In battle he slays Tiamat & from her body orders the material universe. He inaugurates the Babylonian Empire — then from gibbets & bloody entrails of Tiamat's incestuous son he creates the human race to serve forever the comfort of gods — & their high priests & anointed kings.

Father Zeus & the Olympians wage war against Mother Gaia & the Titans, those partisans of Chaos, the old ways of hunting & gathering, of aimless wandering, androgyny & the license of beasts.

Amon-Ra (Being) sits alone in the primordial Chaos-Ocean of NUN creating all the other gods by jerking off — but Chaos also manifests as the dragon Apophis whom Ra must destroy (along with his state of glory, his shadow & his magic) in order that the Pharaoh may safely rule — a victory ritually re-created daily in Imperial temples to confound the enemies of the State, of cosmic Order.

Chaos is Hun Tun, Emperor of the Center. One day the South Sea, Emperor Shu, & the North Sea, Emperor Hu (*shu hu* = lightning) paid a visit to Hun Tun, who always treated them well. Wishing to repay his kindness they said, "All beings have seven orifices for seeing, hearing, eating, shitting, etc. — but poor old Hun Tun has none! Let's drill some into him!" So they did — one orifice a day — till on the seventh day, Chaos died.

But...Chaos is also an enormous chicken's egg. Inside it P'an-Ku is born & grows for 18,000 years — at last the egg opens up, splits into sky & earth, yang & yin. Now P'an-Ku grows into a column that holds up the universe — or else he *becomes* the universe (breath  $\Rightarrow$  wind, eyes  $\Rightarrow$  sun & moon, blood & humors  $\Rightarrow$  rivers & seas, hair & lashes  $\Rightarrow$  stars & planets, sperm  $\Rightarrow$  pearls, marrow  $\Rightarrow$  jade, his fleas  $\Rightarrow$  human beings, etc.)

Or else he becomes the man/monster Yellow Emperor. Or else he becomes Lao Tzu, prophet of Tao. In fact, poor old Hun Tun is the Tao itself.

"Nature's music has no existence outside things. The various apertures, pipes, flutes, all living beings together make up nature. The "I" cannot produce things & things cannot produce the "I," which is self-existent. Things are what they are spontaneously, not caused by something else. Everything is natural & does not know why it is so. The 10,000 things have 10,000 different states, all in motion as if there were a True Lord to move them — but if we search for evidence of this Lord we fail to find any."  
(Kuo Hsiang)

Every realized consciousness is an "emperor" whose sole form of rule is to do nothing to disturb the spontaneity of nature, the Tao. The "sage" is not Chaos itself, but rather a loyal child of Chaos — one of P'an-Ku's fleas, a fragment of flesh of Tiamat's monstrous son. "Heaven and Earth," says Chuang Tzu, "were born at the same time I was, & the 10,000 things are one with me."

Ontological Anarchism tends to disagree only with the Taoists' total quietism. In our world Chaos has been overthrown by younger gods, moralists, phalocrats, banker-priests, fit lords for

serfs. If rebellion proves impossible then at least a kind of clandestine spiritual jihad might be launched. Let it follow the war-banners of the anarchist black dragon, Tiamat, Hun Tun.  
Chaos never died.

# Pornography

In persia I saw that poetry is meant to be set to music & chanted or sung — for one reason alone — because it *works*.

A right combination of image & tune plunges the audience into a *hal* (something between emotional/aesthetic mood & trance of hyperawareness), outbursts of weeping, fits of dancing — measurable physical response to art. For us the link between poetry & body died with the bardic era — we read under the influence of a cartesian anaesthetic gas.

In N. India even non-musical recitation provokes noise & motion, each good couplet applauded, “Wa! Wa!” with elegant hand-jive, tossing of rupees — whereas we listen to poetry like some SciFi brain in a jar — at best a wry chuckle or grimace, vestige of simian rictus — the rest of the body off on some other planet.

In the East poets are sometimes thrown in prison — a sort of compliment, since it suggests the author has done something at least as real as theft or rape or revolution. Here poets are allowed to publish anything at all — a sort of punishment in effect, prison without walls, without echoes, without palpable existence — shadow-realm of print, or of abstract thought — world without risk or *eros*.

So poetry is dead again — & even if the mumia from its corpse retains some healing properties, auto-resurrection isn’t one of them.

If rulers refuse to consider poems as crimes, then someone must commit crimes that serve the function of poetry, or texts that possess the resonance of terrorism. At any cost re-connect poetry to the body. Not crimes against bodies, but against Ideas (& Ideas-in-things) which are deadly & suffocating. Not stupid libertinage but exemplary crimes, aesthetic crimes, crimes for love. In England some pornographic books are still banned. Pornography has a measurable physical effect on its readers. Like propaganda it sometimes changes lives because it uncovers true desires.

Our culture produces most of its porn out of body-hatred — but erotic art in itself makes a better vehicle for enhancement of being/consciousness/bliss — as in certain oriental works. A sort of Western tantrik porn might help galvanize the corpse, make it shine with some of the glamor of crime.

America has freedom of speech because all words are considered equally vapid. Only *images* count — the censors love snaps of death & mutilation but recoil in horror at the sight of a child masturbating — apparently they experience this as an invasion of their existential validity, their identification with the Empire & its subtlest gestures.

No doubt even the most poetic porn would never revive the faceless corpse to dance & sing (like the Chinese Chaos-bird) — but...imagine a script for a three-minute film set on a mythical isle of runaway children who inhabit ruins of old castles or build totem-huts & junk-assemblage nests — mixture of animation, special-effects, compugraphix & color tape — edited tight as a fastfood commercial...

...but weird & naked, feathers & bones, tents sewn with crystal, black dogs, pigeon-blood — flashes of amber limbs tangled in sheets — faces in starry masks kissing soft creases of skin



— androgynous pirates, castaway faces of columbines sleeping on thigh-white flowers — nasty hilarious piss jokes, pet lizards lapping spilt milk — nude break-dancing — victorian bathtub with rubber ducks & pink boners — Alice on ganja...

...atonal punk reggae scored for gamelan, synthesizer, saxophones & drums — electric boogie lyrics sung by aetherial children's choir — ontological anarchist lyrics, cross between Hafez & Pancho Villa, Li Po & Bakunin, Kabir & Tzara — call it "CHAOS — the Rock Video!"

No...probably just a dream. Too expensive to produce, & besides, who would see it? Not the kids it was meant to seduce. Pirate TV is a futile fantasy, rock merely another commodity — forget the slick gesamtkunstwerk, then. Leaflet a playground with inflammatory smutty feuillets — pornopropaganda, crackpot samizdat to unchain Desire from its bondage.

# Crime

Justice cannot be obtained under any Law — action in accord with spontaneous nature, action which is just, cannot be defined by dogma. The crimes advocated in these broadsheets cannot be committed against self or other but only against the mordant crystallization of Ideas into structures of poisonous Thrones & Dominations.

That is, not crimes against nature or humanity but crimes by legal fiat. Sooner or later the uncovering & unveiling of self/nature transmogrifies a person into a brigand — like stepping into another world then returning to this one to discover you've been declared a traitor, heretic, exile. The Law waits for you to stumble on a mode of being, a soul different from the FDA-approved purple-stamped standard dead meat — & as soon as you begin to act in harmony with nature the Law garottes & strangles you — so don't play the blessed liberal middleclass martyr — accept the fact that you're a criminal & be prepared to act like one.

Paradox: to embrace Chaos is not to slide toward entropy but to emerge into an energy like stars, a pattern of instantaneous grace — a spontaneous organic order completely different from the carrion pyramids of sultans, muftis, cadis & grinning executioners.

After Chaos comes Eros — the principle of order implicit in the nothingness of the unqualified One. Love is structure, system, the only code untainted by slavery & drugged sleep. We must become crooks & con-men to protect its spiritual beauty in a bezel of clandestinity, a hidden garden of espionage.

Don't just survive while waiting for someone's revolution to clear your head, don't sign up for the armies of anorexia or bulimia — act as if you were already free, calculate the odds, step out, remember the Code Duello — Smoke Pot/Eat Chicken/Drink Tea. Every man his own vine & figtree (*Circle Seven Koran*, Noble Drew Ali) — carry your Moorish passport with pride, don't get caught in the crossfire, keep your back covered — but take the risk, dance before you calcify.

The natural social model for ontological anarchism is the child-gang or the bank-robbers-band. Money is a lie — this adventure must be feasible without it — booty & pillage should be spent before it turns back into dust. Today is Resurrection Day — money wasted on beauty will be alchemically transmuted into elixir. As my uncle Melvin used to say, stolen watermelon tastes sweeter. The world is already re-made according to the heart's desire — but civilization owns all the leases & most of the guns. Our feral angels demand we trespass, for they manifest themselves only on forbidden grounds. High Way Man. The yoga of stealth, the lightning raid, the enjoyment of treasure.

# Sorcery

The universe wants to play. Those who refuse out of dry spiritual greed & choose pure contemplation forfeit their humanity — those who refuse out of dull anguish, those who hesitate, lose their chance at divinity — those who mold themselves blind masks of Ideas & thrash around seeking some proof of their own solidity end by seeing out of dead men's eyes.

Sorcery: the systematic cultivation of enhanced consciousness or non-ordinary awareness & its deployment in the world of deeds & objects to bring about desired results.

The incremental openings of perception gradually banish the false selves, our cacophonous ghosts — the “black magic” of envy & vendetta backfires because Desire cannot be forced. Where our knowledge of beauty harmonizes with the *ludus naturae*, sorcery begins.

No, not spoon-bending or horoscopy, not the Golden Dawn or make-believe shamanism, astral projection or the Satanic Mass — if it's mumbo jumbo you want go for the real stuff, banking, politics, social science — not that weak blavatskian crap.

Sorcery works at creating around itself a psychic/physical space or openings into a space of untrammelled expression — the metamorphosis of quotidian place into angelic sphere. This involves the manipulation of symbols (which are also things) & of people (who are also symbolic) — the archetypes supply a vocabulary for this process & therefore are treated as if they were both real & unreal, like words. Imaginal Yoga.

The sorcerer is a Simple Realist: the world is real — but then so must consciousness be real since its effects are so tangible. The dullard finds even wine tasteless but the sorcerer can be intoxicated by the mere sight of water. Quality of perception defines the world of intoxication — but to sustain it & expand it to include *others* demands activity of a certain kind — sorcery. Sorcery breaks no law of nature because there is no Natural Law, only the spontaneity of *natura naturans*, the tao. Sorcery violates laws which seek to chain this flow — priests, kings, hierophants, mystics, scientists & shopkeepers all brand the sorcerer *enemy* for threatening the power of their charade, the tensile strength of their illusory web.

A poem can act as a spell & vice versa — but sorcery refuses to be a metaphor for mere literature — it insists that symbols must cause events as well as private epiphanies. It is not a critique but a re-making. It rejects all eschatology & metaphysics of removal, all bleary nostalgia & strident futurismo, in favor of a paroxysm or seizure of *presence*.

Incense & crystal, dagger & sword, wand, robes, rum, cigars, candles, herbs like dried dreams — the virgin boy staring into a bowl of ink — wine & ganja, meat, yantras & gestures — rituals of pleasure, the garden of houris & sakis — the sorcerer climbs these snakes & ladders to a moment which is fully saturated with its own color, where mountains are mountains & trees are trees, where the body becomes all time, the beloved all space.

The tactics of ontological anarchism are rooted in this secret Art — the goals of ontological anarchism appear in its flowering. Chaos hexes its enemies & rewards its devotees...this strange yellowing pamphlet, pseudonymous & dust-stained, reveals all...send away for one split second of eternity.

# Advertisement

What this tells you is not prose. It may be pinned to the board but it's still alive & wriggling. It does not want to seduce you unless you're extremely young & good-looking (enclose recent photo).

Hakim Bey lives in a seedy Chinese hotel where the proprietor nods out over newspaper & scratchy broadcasts of Peking Opera. The ceiling fan turns like a sluggish dervish — sweat falls on the page — the poet's kaftan is rusty, his ovals spill ash on the rug — his monologues seem disjointed & slightly sinister — outside shuttered windows the barrio fades into palmtrees, the naive blue ocean, the philosophy of tropicalismo.

Along a highway somewhere east of Baltimore you pass an Airstream trailer with a big sign on the lawn SPIRITUAL READINGS & the image of a crude black hand on a red background. Inside you notice a display of dream-books, numbers-books, pamphlets on HooDoo and Santeria, dusty old nudist magazines, a pile of *Boy's Life*, treatises on fighting-cocks...& this book, *Chaos*. Like words spoken in a dream, portentous, evanescent, changing into perfumes, birds, colors, forgotten music.

This book distances itself by a certain impassibility of surface, almost a glassiness. It doesn't wag its tail & it doesn't snarl but it bites & humps the furniture. It doesn't have an ISBN number & it doesn't want you for a disciple but it might kidnap your children.

This book is nervous like coffee or malaria — it sets up a network of cut-outs & safe drops between itself & its readers — but it's so baldfaced & literal-minded it practically encodes itself — it smokes itself into a stupor.

A mask, an automythology, a map without placenames — stiff as an egyptian wallpainting nevertheless it reaches to caress someone's face — & suddenly finds itself out in the street, in a body, embodied in light, walking, awake, almost satisfied.

— NYC, May 1-July 4, 1984

# **Communiques of the Association for Ontological Anarchy**

# Communique #1 (spring 1986)

## I. Slogans & Mottos for Subway Graffiti & Other Purposes

ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANISM

POETIC TERRORISM

(for scrawling or rubberstamping on advertisements:)

THIS IS YOUR TRUE DESIRE

MARXISM-STIRNERISM

STRIKE FOR INDOLENCE & SPIRITUAL BEAUTY

YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE BEAUTIFUL FEET

THE CHAINS OF LAW HAVE BEEN BROKEN

TANTRIK PORNOGRAPHY

RADICAL ARISTOCRATISM

KIDS' LIB URBAN GUERILLAS

IMAGINARY SHIITE FANATICS

BOLO'BOLO

GAY ZIONISM

(SODOM FOR THE SODOMITES)

PIRATE UTOPIAS

CHAOS NEVER DIED

Some of these are "sincere" slogans of the A.O.A. — others are meant to rouse public apprehension & misgivings — but we're not sure which is which. Thanx to Stalin, Anon., Bob Black, Pir Hassan (upon his mention be peace), F. Nietzsche, Hank Purcell Jr., "P.M.," & Bro. Abu Jihad al-Salah of the Moorish Temple of Dagon.

## II. Some Poetic-Terrorist Ideas Still Sadly Languishing in the Realm of "Conceptual Art"

1. Walk into Citibank or Chembank computer customer service area during busy period, take a shit on the floor, & leave.
2. Chicago May Day '86: organize "religious" procession for Haymarket "Martyrs" — huge banners with sentimental portraits, wreathed in flowers & streaming with tinsel & ribbon, borne by penitenti in black KKKatholic-style hooded gowns — outrageous campy TV acolytes with incense & holy water sprinkle the crowd — anarchists w/ash-smeared faces beat themselves with little flails & whips — a "Pope" in black robes blesses tiny symbolic coffins reverently carried to Cemetery by weeping punks. Such a spectacle ought to offend *nearly everyone*.

3. Paste up in public places a xerox flyer, photo of a beautiful twelve-year-old boy, naked and masturbating, clearly titled: THE FACE OF GOD.
4. Mail elaborate & exquisite magickal “blessings” *anonymously* to people or groups you admire, e.g. for their politics or spirituality or physical beauty or success in crime, etc. Follow the same general procedure as outlined in Section 5 below, but utilize an aesthetic of good fortune, bliss or love, as appropriate.
5. Invoke a terrible curse on a malign *institution*, such as the *New York Post* or the MUZAK company. A technique adapted from Malaysian sorcerers: send the Company a package containing a bottle, corked and sealed with black wax. Inside: dead insects, scorpions, lizards or the like; a bag containing graveyard dirt (“gris-gris” in American Hoodoo terminology) along with other noxious substances; an egg, pierced with iron nails and pins; and a scroll on which an emblem is drawn (see p. 57).

(This *yantra* or *veve* invokes the Black Djinn, the Self’s dark shadow. Full details obtainable from the A.O.A.) An accompanying note explains that the hex is sent against the *institution* & not against individuals — but unless the institution itself *ceases to be malign*, the curse (like a mirror) will begin to infect the premises with noxious fortune, a miasma of negativity. Prepare a “news release” explaining the curse & taking credit for it in the name of the American Poetry Society. Mail copies of this text to all employees of the institution & to selected media. The night before these letters arrive, wheatpaste the institutional premises with xerox copies of the Black Djinn’s emblem, where they will be seen by all employees arriving for work next morning.

(Thanx to Abu Jihad again, & to Sri Anamananda — the Moorish Castellan of Belvedere Weather Tower — & other comrades of the Central Park Autonomous Zone, & Brooklyn Temple Number 1)

## Communique #2: The Kallikak Memorial Bolo & Chaos Ashram: A Proposal

Nursing an obsession for Airstream trailers — those classic miniature dirigibles on wheels — & also the New Jersey Pine Barrens, huge lost backlands of sandy creeks & tar pines, cranberry bogs & ghost towns, population around 14 per sq. mile, dirt roads overgrown with fern, broken-spine cabins & isolated rusty mobile homes with burnt-out cars in the front yards

land of the mythical Kallikaks — Piney families studied by eugenicists in the 1920's to justify sterilization of rural poor. Some Kallikaks married well, prospered, & waxed bourgeois thanx to good genes — others however never worked real jobs but lived off the woods — incest, sodomy, mental deficiencies galore — photos touched up to make them look vacant & morose — descended from rogue Indians, Hessian mercenaries, rum smugglers, deserters — Lovecraftian degenerates

come to think of it the Kallikaks might well have produced secret Chaotes, precursor sex radicals, Zerowork prophets. Like other monotone landscapes (desert, sea, swamp), the Barrens seem infused with erotic power — not vril or orgone so much as a languid disorder, almost a sluttishness of Nature, as if the very ground & water were formed of sexual flesh, membranes, spongy erectile tissue. We want to squat there, maybe an abandoned hunting/fishing lodge with old woodstove & privy — or decaying Vacation Cabins on some disused County Highway — or just a woodlot where we park 2 or 3 Airstreams hidden back in the pines near creek or swimming hole. Were the Kallikaks onto something good? We'll find out

somewhere boys dream that extraterrestrials will come to rescue them from their families, perhaps vaporizing the parents with some alien ray in the process. Oh well. Space Pirate Kidnap Plot Uncovered — “Alien” Unmasked As Shiite Fanatic Queer Poet — UFOs Seen Over Pine Barrens — “Lost Boys Will Leave Earth,” Claims So-Called Prophet Of Chaos Hakim Bey

runaway boys, mess & disorder, ecstasy & sloth, skinny-dipping, childhood as permanent insurrection — collections of frogs, snails, leaves — pissing in the moonlight — 11, 12, 13 — old enough to seize back control of one's own history from parents, school, Welfare, TV — Come live with us in the Barrens — we'll cultivate a local brand of seedless rope to finance our luxuries & contemplation of summer's alchemy — & otherwise produce nothing but artifacts of Poetic Terrorism & mementos of our pleasures

going for aimless rides in the old pickup, fishing & gathering, lying around in the shade reading comics & eating grapes — this is our economy. The suchness of things when unchained from the Law, each molecule an orchid, each atom a pearl to the attentive consciousness — this is our cult. The Airstream is draped with Persian rugs, the lawn is profuse with satisfied weeds

the treehouse becomes a wooden spaceship in the nakedness of July & midnight, half-open to the stars, warm with epicurean sweat, rushed & then hushed by the breathing of the Pines. (Dear *Bolo Log*: You asked for a practical & feasible utopia — here it is, no mere post-holocaust fantasy, no castles on the moon of Jupiter — a scheme we could start up tomorrow — except that every single aspect of it breaks some law, reveals some absolute taboo in U.S. society, threatens



the very fabric of etc., etc. Too bad. This is our true desire, & to attain it we must contemplate not only a life of pure art but also pure crime, pure insurrection. Amen.)

(Thanx to the Grim Reaper & other members of the Si Fan Temple of Providence for YALU, GANO, SILA, & ideas)

## Communique #3: Haymarket Issue

“I need only mention in passing that there is a curious reappearance of the Cat-fish tradition in the popular Godzilla cycle of films which arose after the nuclear chaos unleashed upon Japan. In fact, the symbolic details in the evolution of Godzilla filmic poplore parallel in a quite surprising way the traditional Japanese and Chinese mythological and folkloric themes of combat with an ambivalent chaos creature (some of the films, like *Mothra*, directly recalling the ancient motifs of the cosmic egg/gourd/cocoon) that is usually tamed, after the failure of the civilizational order, through the special and indirect agency of children.” — Girardot, *Myth & Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos (hun-t'un)*

In some old Moorish Science Temple (in Chicago or Baltimore) a friend claimed to have seen a secret altar on which rested a matched pair of six shooters (in velvet-lined case) & a *black* fez. Supposedly initiation to the inner circle required the neophyte Moor to assassinate at least one cop. /// What about Louis Lingg? Was he a precursor of Ontological Anarchism? “I despise you” — one can’t help but admiring such sentiments. But the man dynamited himself aged 22 to cheat the gallows...this is not exactly our chosen path. /// The IDEA of the POLICE like hydra grows 100 new heads for each one cut off — and all these heads are *live cops*. Slicing off heads gains us nothing, but only enhances the beast’s power till it swallows us. /// First murder the IDEA — blow up the monument *inside us* — & then perhaps...the balance of power will shift. When the last cop in our brain is gunned down by the last unfulfilled desire — perhaps even the landscape around us will begin to change.../// Poetic Terrorism proposes this *sabotage of archetypes* as the only practical insurrectionary tactic for the present. But as Shiite Extremists eager for the overthrow (by any means) of all police, ayatollahs, bankers, executioners, priests, etc., we reserve the option of venerating even the “failures” of radical excess. /// A few days unchained from the Empire of Lies might well be worth considerable sacrifice; a moment of exalted realization may outweigh a lifetime of microcephalic boredom & work. /// But this moment must *become ours* — and our ownership of it is seriously compromised if we must commit suicide to preserve its integrity. So we mix our veneration with irony — it’s not martyrdom itself we propose, but the courage of the dynamiter, the self-possession of a Chaos-monster, the attainment of criminal & illegal pleasures.

## Communique #4: The End of the World

The A.O.A. declares itself officially *bored* with the End of the World. The canonical version has been used since 1945 to keep us cowering in fear of Mutual Assured Destruction & in snivelling servitude to our super-hero politicians (the only ones capable of handling deadly Green Kryptonite)...

What does it mean that we have invented a way to destroy all life on Earth? Nothing much. We have *dreamed* this as an escape from the contemplation of our own individual deaths. We have made an emblem to serve as the mirror-image of a discarded immortality. Like demented dictators we swoon at the thought of taking it *all* down with us into the Abyss.

The unofficial version of the Apocalypse involves a lascivious yearning for the End, & for a post-Holocaust Eden where the Survivalists (or the 144,000 Elect of *Revelations*) can indulge themselves in orgies of Dualist hysteria, endless final confrontations with a seductive evil...

We have seen the ghost of Rene Guenon, cadaverous & topped with a fez (like Boris Karloff as Ardis Bey in *The Mummy*) leading a funereal No Wave Industrial-Noise rock band in loud buzzing blackfly-chants for the death of Culture & Cosmos: the elitist fetishism of pathetic nihilists, the Gnostic self-disgust of “post-sexual” intellectoids.

Are these dreary ballads not simply mirror-images of all those lies & platitudes about Progress & the Future, beamed from every loudspeaker, zapped like paranoid brain-waves from every schoolbook & TV in the world of the Consensus? The thanatosis of the Hip Millenarians extrudes itself like pus from the false *health* of the Consumers’ & Workers’ Paradises.

Anyone who can read history with both hemispheres of the brain knows that a world comes to an end every instant — the waves of time leave washed up behind themselves only dry memories of a closed & petrified past — imperfect memory, itself already dying & autumnal. And every instant also gives birth to a world — despite the cavillings of philosophers & scientists whose bodies have grown numb — a present in which all impossibilities are renewed, where regret & premonition fade to nothing in one presential hologrammatical psychomantic gesture.

The “normative” past or the future heat-death of the universe mean as little to us as last year’s GNP or the withering away of the State. All Ideal pasts, all futures which have not yet come to pass, simply obstruct our consciousness of total vivid presence.

Certain sects believe that the world (or “a” world) has *already come to an end*. For Jehovah’s Witnesses it happened in 1914 (yes folks, we are living in the Book of Revelations *now*). For certain oriental occultists, it occurred during the Major Conjunction of the Planets in 1962. Joachim of Fiore proclaimed the Third Age, that of the Holy Spirit, which replaced those of Father & Son. Hassan II of Alamut proclaimed the Great Resurrection, the immanentization of the eschaton, paradise on earth. Profane time came to an end somewhere in the late Middle Ages. Since then we’ve been living angelic time — only most of us don’t know it.

Or to take an even more Radical Monist stance: Time never started at all. Chaos never died. The Empire was never founded. We are not now & never have been slaves to the past or hostages to the future.

We suggest that the End of the World be declared a *fait accompli*; the exact date is unimportant. The ranters in 1650 knew that the Millenium comes *now* into each soul that wakes to itself, to its own centrality & divinity. "Rejoice, fellow creature," was their greeting. "All is ours!"

I want no part of any other End of the World. A boy smiles at me in the street. A black crow sits in a pink magnolia tree, cawing as orgone accumulates & discharges in a split second over the city...summer begins. I may be your lover...but I spit on your Millenium.

## Communique #5: “Intellectual S/M Is the Fascism of the Eighties — The Avant-Garde Eats Shit and Likes It”

COMRADES!

Recently some confusion about “Chaos” has plagued the A.O.A. from certain revanchist quarters, forcing us (who despise polemics) at last to indulge in a Plenary Session devoted to denunciations *ex cathedra*, portentous as hell; our faces burn red with rhetoric, spit flies from our lips, neck veins bulge with pulpit fervor. We must at last descend to flying banners with angry slogans (in 1930’s type faces) declaring what Ontological Anarchy *is not*.

Remember, only in Classical Physics does Chaos have anything to do with entropy, heat-death, or decay. In our physics (Chaos Theory), Chaos identifies with tao, beyond both yin-as-entropy & yang-as-energy, more a principle of continual creation than of any *nihil*, void in the sense of *potentia*, not exhaustion. (Chaos as the “sum of all orders.”)

From this alchemy we quintessentialize an aesthetic theory. Chaote art may act terrifying, it may even act *grand guignol*, but it can never allow itself to be drenched in putrid negativity, thanatosis, *schadenfreude* (delight in the misery of others), crooning over Nazi memorabilia & serial murders. Ontological Anarchy collects no snuff films & is bored to tears with dominatrices who spout french philosophy. (“Everything is hopeless & I knew it before you did, asshole. Nyahh!”)

Wilhelm Reich was driven half mad & killed by agents of the Emotional Plague; maybe half his work derived from sheer paranoia (UFO conspiracies, homophobia, even his orgasm theory), BUT on one point we agree wholeheartedly — *sexpol*: sexual repression breeds death obsession, which leads to *bad politics*. A great deal of avant-garde Art is saturated with Deadly Orgone Rays (DOR). Ontological Anarchy aims to build aesthetic cloud-busters (OR-guns) to disperse the miasma of cerebral sado-masochism which now passes for slick, hip, new, fashionable. Self-mutilating “performance” artists strike us as banal & stupid — their art makes everyone *more unhappy*. What kind of two-bit conniving horseshit...what kind of cockroach-brained Art creeps cooked up this apocalypse stew?

Of course the avant-garde seems “smart” — so did Marinetti & the Futurists, so did Pound & Celine. Compared to that kind of intelligence we’d choose real stupidity, bucolic New Age blissed-out inanity — we’d rather be pinheads than *queer for death*. But luckily we don’t have to scoop out our brains to attain our own queer brand of satori. All the faculties, all the senses belong to us as our property — both heart & head, intellect & spirit, body & soul. Ours is no art of mutilation but of excess, superabundance, amazement.

The purveyors of pointless gloom are the Death Squads of contemporary aesthetics — & we are the “disappeared ones.” Their make-believe ballroom of occult 3<sup>rd</sup>-Reich bric-a-brac & child

murder attracts the manipulators of the Spectacle — death looks better on TV than life — & we Chaotes, who preach an insurrectionary joy, are edged out towards silence.

Needless to say we reject all censorship by Church & State — but “after the revolution” we would be willing to take individual & personal responsibility for burning all the Death Squad snuff-art crap & running them out of town on a rail. (Criticism becomes *direct action* in an anarchist context.) My space has room neither for Jesus & his lords of the flies nor for Chas. Manson & his literary admirers. I want no mundane police — I want no cosmic axe-murderers either; no TV chainsaw massacres, no sensitive poststructuralist novels about necrophilia.

As it happens, the A.O.A. can scarcely hope to sabotage the suffocating mechanisms of the State & its ghostly circuitry — but we just *might* happen to find ourselves in a position to do something about lesser manifestations of the DOR plague such as the Corpse-Eaters of the Lower East Side & other Art scum. We support artists who use *terrifying* material in some “higher cause” — who use loving/sexual material of any kind, however shocking or illegal — who use their anger & disgust & their true desires to lurch toward self-realization & beauty & adventure. “Social Nihilism,” yes — but not the dead nihilism of gnostic self-disgust. Even if it’s violent & abrasive, anyone with a vestigial 3<sup>rd</sup> eye can *see* the differences between revolutionary pro-life art & reactionary pro-death art. DOR stinks, & the chaote nose can sniff it out — just as it knows the perfume of spiritual/sexual joy, however buried or masked by other darker scents. Even the Radical Right, for all its horror of flesh & the senses, occasionally comes up with a moment of perception & consciousness-enhancement — but the Death Squads, for all their tired lip service to fashionable revolutionary abstractions, offer us about as much true libertarian energy as the FBI, FDA, or the double-dip Baptists.

We live in a society which advertises its costliest commodities with images of death & mutilation, beaming them direct to the reptilian back-brain of the millions thru alpha-wave-generating carcinogenic reality-warping devices — while certain images of life (such as our favorite, a child masturbating) are banned & punished with incredible ferocity. It takes no guts at all to be an Art Sadist, for salacious death lies at the aesthetic center of our Consensus Paradigm. “Leftists” who like to dress up & play Police-&-Victim, people who jerk off to atrocity photos, people who like to *think* & intellectualize about splatter art & highfalutin hopelessness & groovy ghoulishness & *other people’s misery* — such “artists” are nothing but police-without-power (a perfect definition for many “revolutionaries” too). We have a black bomb for these aesthetic fascists — it explodes with sperm & firecrackers, raucous weeds & piracy, weird Shiite heresies & bubbling paradise-fountains, complex rhythms, pulsations of life, all shapeless & exquisite.

Wake up! Breathe! Feel the world’s breath against your skin! Seize the day! Breathe! Breathe!

(Thanx to J. Mander’s *Four Arguments for the Abolition of Television*; Adam Exit; & the Moorish Cosmopolitan of Williamsburg)

# Communique #6

## I. Salon Apocalypse: “Secret Theater”

As long as no Stalin breathes down our necks, why not make *some* art in the service of...an insurrection?

Never mind if it's “impossible.” What else can we hope to attain but the “impossible”? Should we wait for *someone else* to reveal our true desires?

If art has died, or the audience has withered away, then we find ourselves free of two dead weights. Potentially, everyone is now some kind of artist — & potentially every audience has regained its innocence, its ability to *become* the art that it experiences.

Provided we can escape from the museums we carry around inside us, provided we can stop selling ourselves tickets to the galleries in our own skulls, we can begin to contemplate an art which re-creates the goal of the sorcerer: changing the structure of reality by the manipulation of living symbols (in this case, the images we've been “given” by the organizers of this salon — murder, war, famine, & greed).

We might now contemplate aesthetic actions which possess some of the resonance of terrorism (or “cruelty,” as Artaud put it) aimed at the destruction of abstractions rather than people, at liberation rather than power, pleasure rather than profit, joy rather than fear. “Poetic Terrorism.” Our chosen images have the potency of darkness — but all images are masks, & behind these masks lie energies we can turn toward light & pleasure.

For example, the man who invented *aikido* was a samurai who became a pacifist & refused to fight for Japanese imperialism. He became a hermit, lived on a mountain sitting under a tree..

One day a former fellow-officer came to visit him & accused him of betrayal, cowardice, etc. The hermit said nothing, but kept on sitting — & the officer fell into a rage, drew his sword, & struck. Spontaneously the unarmed master disarmed the officer & returned his sword. Again & again the officer tried to kill, using every subtle *kata* in his repertoire — but out of his empty mind the hermit each time invented a new way to disarm him.

The officer of course became his first disciple. Later, they learned how to *dodge bullets*. We might contemplate some form of metadrama meant to capture a taste of this performance, which gave rise to a wholly new art, a totally non-violent way of fighting — war without murder, “the sword of life” rather than death.

A conspiracy of artists, anonymous as any mad bombers, but aimed toward an act of gratuitous generosity rather than violence — at the millennium rather than the apocalypse — or rather, aimed at a *present moment* of aesthetic shock in the service of realization & liberation.

Art tells gorgeous lies that come true.

Is it possible to create a SECRET THEATER in which both artist & audience have completely disappeared — only to re-appear on another plane, where life & art have become the same thing, the pure giving of gifts?

(Note: The “Salon Apocalypse” was organized by Sharon Gannon in July, 1986.)

## II. Murder — War — Famine — Greed

The manichees & cathars believed that the body can be spiritualized — or rather, that the body merely contaminates pure spirit & must be utterly rejected. The Gnostic *perfecti* (radical dualists) starved themselves to death to escape the body & return to the pleroma of pure light. So: to evade the evils of the flesh — murder, war, famine, greed — paradoxically only one path remains: murder of one's own body, war on the flesh, famine unto death, greed for salvation.

The radical monists however (Ismailis, Ranters, Antinomians) consider that body & spirit are one, that the same spirit which pervades a black stone also infuses the flesh with its light; that all lives & all is life.

“Things are what they are spontaneously...everything is natural...all in motion as if there were a True Lord to move them — but if we seek for evidence of this lord we fail to find any.” (Kuo Hsiang)

Paradoxically, the monist path also cannot be followed without some sort of “murder, war, famine, greed”: the transformation of death into life (food, negentropy) — war against the Empire of Lies — “fasting of the soul,” or renunciation of the Lie, of all that is not life — & greed for life itself, the absolute power of desire.

Even more: without knowledge of the darkness (“carnal knowledge”) there can exist no knowledge of the light (“gnosis”). The two knowledges are not merely complementary: say rather *identical*, like the same note played in different octaves. Heraclitus claims that reality persists in a state of “war.” Only clashing notes can make harmony. (“Chaos is the sum of all orders.”) Give each of these four terms a different mask of language (to call the Furies “The Kindly Ones” is not mere euphemism but a way of uncovering *yet more meaning*). Masked, ritualized, realized as art, the terms take on their dark beauty, their “Black Light.”

Instead of murder say *the hunt*, the pure paleolithic economy of all archaic and non-authoritarian tribal society — “venery,” both the killing & eating of flesh & the way of Venus, of desire. Instead of war say *insurrection*, not the revolution of classes & powers but of the eternal rebel, the dark one who uncovers light. Instead of greed say *yearning*, unconquerable desire, mad love. And then instead of famine, which is a kind of mutilation, speak of wholeness, plenty, superabundance, generosity of the self which spirals outward toward the Other.

Without this dance of masks, nothing will be created. The oldest mythology makes Eros the firstborn of Chaos. Eros, the wild one who tames, is the door through which the artist returns to Chaos, the One, and then re-returns, comes back again, bearing one of the patterns of beauty. The artist, the hunter, the warrior: one who is both passionate and balanced, both greedy & altruistic to the utmost extreme. We must be saved from all salvations which save us from ourselves, from our *animal* which is also our *anima*, our very life force, as well as our *animus*, our animating self-empowerment, which may even manifest as anger & greed. BABYLON has told us that our flesh is filth — with this device & the promise of salvation it enslaved us. But — if the flesh is already “saved,” already *light* — if even consciousness itself is a kind of flesh, a palpable & simultaneous living aether — then we need no power to intercede for us. The wilderness, as Omar says, is paradise *even now*.

The true proprietorship of *murder* lies with the Empire, for only freedom is complete life. *War* is Babylonian as well — no free person will die for another's aggrandizement. *Famine* comes into



existence *only* with the civilization of the saviors, the priest-kings — wasn't it Joseph who taught Pharaoh to speculate in grain futures? *Greed* — for land, for symbolic wealth, for power to deform others' souls & bodies for their own *salvation* — greed too arises not from "Nature nature-ing," but from the damming up & canalization of all energies for the Empire's Glory. Against all this, the artist possesses the dance of masks, the total radicalization of language, the invention of a "Poetic Terrorism" which will strike not at living beings but at malign *ideas*, dead-weights on the coffin-lid of our desires. The architecture of suffocation and paralysis will be *blown up*. only by our total celebration of everything — even darkness.

— Summer Solstice, 1986

## Communique #7: Psychic Paleolithism & High Technology: A Position Paper

Just because the A.O.A. talks about “Paleolithism” all the time, don’t get the idea we intend to bomb ourselves back to the Stone Age.

We have no interest in going “back to the land” if the deal includes the boring life of a shit-kicking peasant — nor do we want “tribalism” if it comes with taboos, fetishes & malnutrition. We have no quarrel with the concept of *culture* — including *technology*; for us the problem begins with *civilization*.

What we like about Paleolithic life has been summed up by the Peoples-Without-Authority School of anthropology: the elegant laziness of hunter/gatherer society, the 2-hour workday, the obsession with art, dance, poetry & amorousness, the “democratization of shamanism,” the cultivation of perception — in short, culture.

What we dislike about civilization can be deduced from the following progression: the “Agricultural Revolution”; the emergence of caste; the City & its cult of hieratic control (“Babylon”); slavery; dogma; imperialism (“Rome”). The suppression of sexuality in “work” under the aegis of “authority.” “The Empire never ended.”

A *psychic paleolithism* based on High-Tech — post-agricultural, post-industrial, “Zerowork,” nomadic (or “Rootless Cosmopolitan”) — a Quantum Paradigm Society — this constitutes the ideal vision of the future according to Chaos Theory as well as “Futurology” (in the Robert Anton Wilson-T. Leary sense of the term).

As for the present: we reject all collaboration with the Civilization of Anorexia & Bulimia, with people so ashamed of never suffering that they invent hair shirts for themselves & others — or those who gorge without compassion & then spew the vomit of their suppressed guilt in great masochistic bouts of jogging & dieting. All *our* pleasures & self-disciplines belong to us by Nature — we never deny ourselves, we never give up anything; but some things have given up on us & left us, because we are too large for them. I am both caveman & starfaring mutant, con-man & free prince. Once an Indian Chief was invited to the White House for a banquet. As the food passed round, the Chief heaped his plate to the max, not once but three times. At last the honky sitting next to him says, “Chief, heh-heh, don’t you think that’s a little too much?” “Ugh,” the Chief replies, “little too much *just right* for Chief!”

Nevertheless, certain doctrines of “Futurology” remain problematic. For example, even if we accept the liberatory potential of such new technologies as TV, computers, robotics, Space exploration, etc., we still see a gap between potentiality & actualization. The banalization of TV, the yuppification of computers & the militarization of Space suggest that these technologies in themselves provide no “determined” guarantee of their liberatory use.

Even if we reject the Nuclear Holocaust as just another Spectacular Diversion orchestrated to distract our attention from *real* problems, we must still admit that “Mutual Assured Destruction” & “Pure War” tend to dampen our enthusiasm for certain aspects of the High-Tech Adventure.

Ontological Anarchy retains its affection for Luddism as a tactic: if a given technology, no matter how admirable *in potentia* (in the future), is used to oppress me here & now, then I must either wield the weapon of sabotage or else seize the means of production (or perhaps more importantly the means of *communication*). There is no humanity without *techne* — but there is no *techne* worth more than my humanity.

We spurn knee-jerk anti-Tech anarchism — for ourselves, at least (there exist some who enjoy farming, or so one hears) — and we reject the concept of the Technological Fix as well. For us all forms of determinism appear equally vapid — we're slaves of neither our genes nor our machines. What is "natural" is what we *imagine & create*. "Nature has no Laws — only habits."

Life for us belongs neither to the Past — that land of famous ghosts hoarding their tarnished grave-goods — nor to the Future, whose bulbbraided mutant citizens guard so jealously the secrets of immortality, faster-than-light flight, designer genes & the withering of the State. *Aut nunc aut nihil*. Each moment contains an eternity to be penetrated — yet we lose ourselves in visions seen through corpses' eyes, or in nostalgia for unborn perfections.

The attainments of my ancestors & descendants are nothing more to me than an instructive or amusing tale — I will never call them my betters, even to excuse my own smallness. I print for myself a license to steal from them whatever I need — psychic paleolithism or high-tech — or for that matter the gorgeous detritus of civilization itself, secrets of the Hidden Masters, pleasures of frivolous nobility & *la vie boheme*.

*La decadence*, Nietzsche to the contrary notwithstanding, plays as deep a role in Ontological Anarchy as health — we take what we want of each. Decadent aesthetes do not wage stupid wars nor submerge their consciousness in microcephalic greed & resentment. They seek adventure in artistic innovation & non-ordinary sexuality rather than in the misery of others. The A.O.A. admires & emulates their sloth, their disdain for the stupidity of normalcy, their expropriation of aristocratic sensibilities. For us these qualities harmonize paradoxically with those of the Old Stone Age & its overflowing health, ignorance of hierarchy, cultivation of *virtu* rather than *Law*. We demand decadence without sickness, & health without boredom!

Thus the A.O.A. gives unqualified support to all indigenous & tribal peoples in their struggle for complete autonomy — & at the same time, to the wildest, most Spaced-out speculations & demands of the Futurologists. The paleolithism of the future (which for us, as mutants, already exists) will be achieved on a grand scale only through a massive technology of the Imagination, and a scientific paradigm which reaches beyond Quantum Mechanics into the realm of Chaos Theory & the hallucinations of Speculative Fiction.

As Rootless Cosmopolitans we lay claim to all the beauties of the past, of the orient, of tribal societies — all this must & can be ours, even the treasuries of the Empire: ours to share. And at the same time we demand a technology which transcends agriculture, industry, even the simultaneity of electricity, a hardware that intersects with the wetware of consciousness, that embraces the power of quarks, of particles travelling backward in time, of quasars & parallel universes.

The squabbling ideologues of anarchism & libertarianism each prescribe some utopia congenial to their various brands of tunnel-vision, ranging from the peasant commune to the L-5 Space City. We say, let a thousand flowers bloom — with no gardener to lop off weeds & sports according to some moralizing or eugenical scheme. The only true conflict is that between the authority of the tyrant & the authority of the realized self — all else is illusion, psychological projection, wasted verbiage.

In one sense the sons & daughters of Gaia have never left the paleolithic; in another sense, all the perfections of the future are already ours. Only insurrection will “solve” this paradox — only the uprising against false consciousness in both ourselves & others will sweep away the technology of oppression & the poverty of the Spectacle. In this battle a painted mask or shaman’s rattle may prove as vital as the seizing of a communications satellite or secret computer network.

Our sole criterion for judging a weapon or a tool is its beauty. The means already *are* the end, in a certain sense; the insurrection already *is* our adventure; Becoming IS Being. Past & future exist within us & for us, alpha & omega. There are no other gods before or after us. We are free in TIME — and will be free in SPACE as well.

(Thanx to Hagbard Celine the Sage of Howth & Environs)

## Communique #8: Chaos Theory & the Nuclear Family

Sunday in Riverside Park the Fathers fix their sons in place, nailing them magically to the grass with baleful ensorcelling stares of milky camaraderie, & force them to throw baseballs back & forth for hours. The boys almost appear to be small St Sebastians pierced by arrows of boredom.

The smug rituals of family fun turn each humid Summer meadow into a Theme Park, each son an unwitting allegory of Father's wealth, a pale representation 2 or 3 times removed from reality: the Child as metaphor of Something-or-other.

And here I come as dusk gathers, stoned on mushroom dust, half convinced that these hundreds of fireflies arise from my own consciousness — Where have they been all these years? why so many so suddenly? — each rising in the moment of its incandescence, describing quick arcs like abstract graphs of the energy in sperm.

"Families! misers of love! How I hate them!" Baseballs fly aimlessly in vesper light, catches are missed, voices rise in peevish exhaustion. The children feel sunset encrusting the last few hours of doled-out freedom, but still the Fathers insist on stretching the tepid postlude of their patriarchal sacrifice till dinnertime, till shadows eat the grass.

Among these sons of the gentry one locks gazes with me for a moment — I transmit telepathically the image of sweet license, the smell of TIME unlocked from all grids of school, music lessons, summer camps, family evenings round the tube, Sundays in the Park with Dad — authentic time, chaotic time.

Now the family is leaving the Park, a little platoon of dissatisfaction. But *that one* turns & smiles back at me in complicity — "Message Received" — & dances away after a firefly, buoyed up by my desire. The Father barks a mantra which dissipates my power.

The moment passes. The boy is swallowed up in the pattern of the week — vanishes like a bare-legged pirate or Indian taken prisoner by missionaries. The Park knows who I am, it stirs under me like a giant jaguar about to wake for nocturnal meditation. Sadness still holds it back, but it remains untamed in its deepest essence: an exquisite disorder at the heart of the city's night.

# Communique #9: Double-Dip Denunciations

## I. Xtianity

Again & again we hope that attitudinizing corpse has finally breathed its last rancorous sigh & floated off to its final pumpkinification. Again & again we imagine the defeat of that obscene flayed death-trip bogey nailed to the walls of all our waiting rooms, never again to whine at us for our sins...

but again & again it resurrects itself & comes creeping back to haunt us like the villain of some *n*th rate snuff-porn splatter film — the thousandth re-make of *Night of the Living Dead* — trailing its snail-track of whimpering humiliation...just when you thought it was safe in the unconscious...it's JAWS for JESUS. Look out! Hardcore Chainsaw Baptists!

and the Leftists, nostalgic for the Omega Point of their dialectical paradise, welcome each galvanized revival of the putrescent creed with coos of delight: Let's dance the tango with all those marxist bishops from Latin America — croon a ballad for the pious Polish dockworkers — hum spirituals for the latest afro-Methodist presidential hopeful from the Bible Belt...

The A.O.A. denounces Liberation Theology as a conspiracy of stalinist nuns — the Whore of Babylon's secret scarlet deal with red fascism in the tropics. *Solidarnosc*? The Pope's Own Labor Union — backed by the AFL/CIO, the Vatican Bank, the Freemason Lodge Propaganda Due, and the Mafia. And if we ever voted we'd never waste that empty gesture on some Xtian dog, no matter what its breed or color.

As for the *real* Xtians, those bored-again self-lobotomized bigots, those Mormon babykillers, those Star Warriors of the Slave Morality, televangelist blackshirts, zombie squads of the Blessed Virgin Mary (who hovers in a pink cloud over the Bronx spewing hatred, anathema, roses of vomit on the sexuality of children, pregnant teenagers & queers)...

As for the genuine death-cultists, ritual cannibals, Armageddon-freaks — the Xtian Right — we can only pray that the RAPTURE WILL COME & snatch them all up from behind the steering wheels of their cars, from their lukewarm game shows & chaste beds, take them all up into heaven & let *us* get on with *human life*.

## II. Abortionists & Anti-abortionists

Rednecks who bomb abortion clinics belong in the same grotesque category of vicious stupidity as bishops who prattle Peace & yet condemn all human sexuality. Nature has no laws ("only habits"), & all law is unnatural. *Everything* belongs to the sphere of personal/imaginal morality — even murder.

However, according to Chaos Theory, it does not follow that we are obliged to like & approve of murder — or abortion. Chaos would enjoy seeing every bastard love-child carried to term

& birthed; sperm & egg alone are mere lovely secretions, but combined as DNA they become potential consciousness, negentropy, joy.

If “meat is murder!” as the Vegans like to claim, what pray tell is abortion? Those totemists who danced to the animals they hunted, who meditated to become one with their living food & share its tragedy, demonstrated values far more humane than the average claque of “pro-Choice” feminoid liberals.

In every single “issue” cooked up for “debate” in the patternbook of the Spectacle, *both sides* are invariably full of shit. The “abortion issue” is no exception..

## Communique #10: Plenary Session Issues New Denunciations — Purges Expected

To offset any sticky karma we might have acquired thru our pulpit-thumping sermonette against Xtians & other end-of-the-world creeps (see last ish) & just to set the record straight: the A.O.A. also denounces all born-again knee-jerk *atheists* & their frowzy late-Victorian luggage of scientistic vulgar materialism. ///// We applaud all anti-Xtian sentiment, of course — & all attacks on *all* organized religions. But...to hear some anarchists talk you'd think the sixties never happened and no one ever dropped LSD. ///// As for the scientists themselves, the Alice-like madnesses of Quantum & Chaos Theory have driven the best of them towards taoism & vedanta (not to mention dada) — & yet if you read *The Match* or *Freedom* you might imagine science was embalmed with Prince Kropotkin — & “religion” with Bishop Ussher. ///// Of course one despises the Aquarian brownshirts, the kind of gurus lauded recently in the *New York Times* for their contributions to Big Business, the franchise-granting yuppie zombie cults, the anorexic metaphysics of New Age banality...but OUR esotericism remains undefiled by these mediocre money-changers & their braindead minions. ///// The heretics & antinomian mystics of Orient & Occident have developed systems based on *inner liberation*. Some of these systems are tainted with religious mysticism & even social reaction — others seem more purely radical or “psychological” — & some even crystallize into revolutionary movements (millenarian Levellers, Assassins, Yellow Turban Taoists, etc.) Whatever their flaws they possess certain magical weapons which anarchism sorely lacks: (1) A sense of the *meta-rational* (“metanoia”), ways to go beyond laminated thinking into smooth (or nomadic or “chaotic”) thinking & perception; (2) an actual definition of self-realized or liberated consciousness, a positive description of its structure, & techniques for approaching it; (3) a coherent archetypal view of epistemology — that is, a way of knowing (about history, for example) that utilizes hermeneutic phenomenology to uncover patterns of *meaning* (something like the Surrealists’ “Paranoia Criticism”); (4) a teaching on sexuality (in the “tantrik” aspects of various Paths) that assigns value to pleasure rather than self-denial, not only for its own sake but as a vehicle of enhanced awareness or “liberation”; (5) an attitude of celebration, what might be called a “Jubilee concept,” a cancelling of psychic debt thru some inherent generosity in reality itself; (6) a *language* (including gesture, ritual, intentionality) with which to animate & communicate these five aspects of cognition; and (7) a silence. ///// It's no surprise to discover how many anarchists are ex-Catholics, defrocked priests or nuns, former altar boys, lapsed born-again baptists or even ex-Shiite fanatics. Anarchism offers up a black (& red) Mass to de-ritualize all spook-haunted brains — a secular exorcism — but then betrays itself by cobbling together a High Church of its own, all cobwebby with Ethical Humanism, Free Thought, Muscular Atheism, & crude Fundamentalist Cartesian Logic. ///// Two decades ago we began the project of becoming Rootless Cosmopolitans, determined to sift the detritus of all tribes, cultures & civilizations (including our own) for viable fragments — & to synthesize from this mess of potsherds a living system of our own — lest (as Blake warned) we become slaves to someone else's. ///// If



some Javanese sorcerer or Native American shaman possesses some precious fragment I need for my own “medicine pouch,” should I sneer & quote Bakunin’s line about stringing up priests with bankers’ guts? or should I remember that anarchy knows no dogma, that Chaos cannot be mapped — & help myself to anything not nailed down? ///// The earliest definitions of anarchy are found in the *Chuang Tzu* & other taoist texts; “mystical anarchism” boasts a hoarier pedigree than the Greco-Rationalist variety. When Nietzsche spoke of the “Hyperboreans” I think he foretold us, who have gone beyond the death of God — & the rebirth of the Goddess — to a realm where spirit & matter are one. Every manifestation of that hierogamy, every material thing & every life, becomes not only “sacred” in itself but also symbolic of its own “divine essence.” ///// Atheism is nothing but the opiate of The Masses (or rather, their self-chosen champions) — & not a very colorful or sexy drug. If we are to follow Baudelaire’s advice & “be always intoxicated,” the A.O.A. would prefer something more like mushrooms, thank you. Chaos is the oldest of the gods — & Chaos never died.

## Communique #11: Special Holiday Season Food Issue Rant: Turn Off the Lite!

The Association for Ontological Anarchy calls for a boycott of all products marketed under the Shibboleth of LITE — beer, meat, lo-cal candy, cosmetics, music, pre-packaged “lifestyles,” whatever.

The concept of LITE (in Situ-jargon) unfolds a complex of symbolism by which the Spectacle hopes to recuperate all revulsion against its commodification of desire. “Natural,” “organic,” “healthy” produce is designed for a market sector of mildly dissatisfied consumers with mild cases of future-shock & mild yearnings for a tepid authenticity. A niche has been prepared for *you*, softly illumined with the illusions of simplicity, cleanliness, thinness, a dash of asceticism & self-denial. Of course, it costs a little more...after all, LITEness was not designed for poor hungry primitivos who still think of food as nourishment rather than decor. It *has* to cost more — otherwise *you* wouldn’t buy it.

The American Middle Class (don’t quibble; you know what I mean) falls naturally into opposite but complementary factions: the Armies of Anorexia & Bulimia. Clinical cases of these diseases represent only the psychosomatic froth on a wave of cultural pathology, deep, diffused & largely unconscious. The Bulimics are those yupped-out gentry who gorge on margharitas & VCRs, then purge on LITE food, jogging, or (an)aerobic jiggling. The Anorexics are the “lifestyle” rebels, ultra-food-faddists, eaters of algae, joyless, dispirited & wan — but smug in their puritanical zeal & their designer hair-shirts. Grotesque junk food simply represents the flip-side of ghoulish “health food”: — nothing tastes like anything but woodchips or additives — it’s all either boring or carcinogenic — or both — & it’s all incredibly *stupid*.

Food, cooked or raw, cannot escape from symbolism. It *is*, & also simultaneously *represents* that which it is. All food is soul food; to treat it otherwise is to court indigestion, both chronic & metaphysical.

But in the airless vault of our civilization, where nearly every experience is mediated, where reality is strained through the deadening mesh of consensus-perception, we lose touch with food as *nourishment*; we begin to construct for ourselves personae based on what we consume, treating *products* as projections of our yearning for the authentic.

The A.O.A. sometimes envisions CHAOS as a cornucopia of continual creation, as a sort of geyser of cosmic generosity; therefore we refrain from advocating any specific diet, lest we offend against the Sacred Multiplicity & the Divine Subjectivity. We’re not about to hawk you yet another New Age prescription for perfect health (only the dead are perfectly healthy); we interest ourselves in *life*, not “lifestyles.”

True lightness we adore, & rich heaviness delights us in its season. Excess suits us to perfection, moderation pleases us, & we have learned that hunger can be the finest of all spices. Everything is light, & the lushest flowers grow round the privy. We dream of phalanstery tables & bolo’bolo

cafes where every festive collective of diners will share the individual genius of a Brillat-Savarin (that saint of taste).

Shaykh Abu Sa'id never saved money or even kept it overnight — therefore, whenever some patron donated a heavy purse to his hospice, the dervishes celebrated with a gourmet feast; & on other days, all went hungry. The point was to enjoy both states, full & empty...

LITE parodies spiritual emptiness & illumination, just as McDonald's travesties the imagery of fullness & celebration. The human spirit (not to mention *hunger*) can overcome & transcend all this fetishism — joy can erupt even at Burger King, & even LITE beer may hide a dose of Dionysus. But why should we have to struggle against this garbageman's tide of cheap rip-off tacky-tack, when we could be drinking the wine of paradise even now under our own vine & fig tree?

Food belongs to the realm of everyday life, the primary arena for all insurrectionary self-empowerment, all spiritual self-enhancement, all seizing-back of pleasure, all revolt against the Planetary Work Machine & its imitation desires. Far be it from us to dogmatize; the Native American hunter might fuel his happiness with fried squirrel, the anarcho-taoist with a handful of dried apricots. Milarepa the Tibetan, after ten years of nettle-soup, ate a butter cake & achieved enlightenment. The dullard sees no *eros* in fine champagne; the sorcerer can fall intoxicated on a glass of water.

Our culture, choking on its own pollutants, cries out (like the dying Goethe) for "More LITE!" — as if these polyunsaturated effluents could somehow assuage our misery, as if their bland weightless tasteless characterlessness could protect us from the gathering dark.

No! This last illusion finally strikes us as too cruel. We are forced against our own slothful inclinations to take a stand & protest. Boycott! Boycott! TURN OFF THE LITE!

Appendix: Menu For An Anarchist Black Banquet (veg & non-veg)

Caviar & blinis; Hundred year old eggs; Squid & rice cooked in ink; Eggplants cooked in their skins with black pickled garlic; Wild rice with black walnuts & black mushrooms; Truffles in black butter; Venison marinated in port, charcoal grilled, served on pumpernickel slices & garnished with roast chestnuts. Black Russians; Guinness-&-champagne; Chinese black tea. Dark chocolate mousse, Turkish coffee, black grapes, plums, cherries, etc.

## Special Halloween Communique: Black Magic as Revolutionary Action

Prepare an ink of pure & genuine saffron mixed with rose-water, adding if possible some blood from a black rooster. In a quiet room furnish an altar with a bowl of the ink, a pen with an iron nib, 7 black candles, an incense burner, & some benzoin. The charm may be written on virgin paper or parchment. Draw the diagram at 4 p.m. on a Wednesday, facing North. Copy the 7-headed diagram (see illustration) without lifting the pen from the paper, in one smooth operation, holding your breath & pressing your tongue to the roof of your mouth. This is the *Barisan Laksamana*, or King of the Djinn. Then draw the Solomon's Seal (a star representing a 5-headed djinn) & other parts of the diagram. Above Solomon's Seal write the name of the individual or institution to be cursed. Now hold the paper in the benzoin fumes, & invoke the white & black djinn *within yourself*:

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim  
as-salaam alikum  
O White Djinn, Radiance of Mohammad  
king of all spirits within me  
O Black Djinn, shadow of myself  
AWAY, destroy my enemy  
— and if you do not  
then be considered a traitor to Allah  
— by virtue of the charm  
La illaha ill'Allah  
Mohammad ar-Rasul Allah

If the curse is to be aimed at an individual oppressor, a wax doll may be prepared & the charm inserted (see illustration).

Seven needles are then driven downward into the top of the head, thru the left & right armpits, left & right hips, & thru the lips or nostrils. Wrap the doll in a white shroud & bury it in the ground where the enemy is sure to walk over it, meanwhile enlisting the aid of local earth spirits:

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim  
O Earth Djinn, Dirt-spirit  
O Black Djinn living underground  
listen, vampire of the soil  
I order you to mark & destroy  
the body & soul of \_\_\_\_\_  
Heed my orders  
for I am the true & original sorcerer  
by virtue of the charm  
la illaha ill'Allah

Mohammad ar-Rasul Allah

If however the curse is intended for an institution or company, assemble the following items: a hard-boiled egg, an iron nail, & 3 iron pins (stick nail & needles into egg); dried scorpion, lizard &/or beetles; a small chamois bag containing graveyard dirt, magnetized iron fillings, asafoetida & sulphur, & tied with a red ribbon. Sew the charm into yellow silk & seal it with red wax. Place all these things in a wide-necked bottle, cork it, & seal it with wax.

The bottle may now be carefully packaged & sent by mail to the target institution — for example a Xtian televangelist show, the *New York Post*, the MUZAK company, a school or college — along with a copy of the following statement (extra copies may be mailed to individual employees, &/or posted surreptitiously around the premises):

Malay Black Djinn Curse

*These premises have been cursed by black sorcery. The curse has been activated according to correct rituals. This institution is cursed because it has oppressed the Imagination & defiled the Intellect, degraded the arts toward stupefaction, spiritual slavery, propaganda for State & Capital, puritanical reaction, unjust profits, lies & aesthetic blight. The employees of this institution are now in danger. No individual has been cursed, but the place itself has been infected with ill fortune & malignancy. Those who do not wake up & quit, or begin sabotaging the workplace, will gradually fall under the effect of this sorcery. Removing or destroying the implement of sorcery will do no good. It has been seen in this place, & this place is cursed. Reclaim your humanity & revolt in the name of the Imagination — or else be judged (in the mirror of this charm) an enemy of the human race.*

We suggest “taking credit” for this action in the name of some other offensive cultural institution, such as the American Poetry Society or the Women’s Anti-Porn Crusade (give full address).

We also suggest, in order to counter-balance the effect on yourself of calling up the personal black djinn, that you send a *magical blessing* to someone or some group you love &/or admire. Do this anonymously, & make the gift beautiful. No precise ritual need be followed, but the imagery should be allowed to spring from the well of consciousness in an intuitive/spontaneous meditational state. Use sweet incense, red & white candles, hard candy, wine, flowers, etc. If possible include real silver, gold, or jewels in the gift.

This how-to-do-it manual on the Malay Black Djinn Curse has been prepared according to authentic & complete ritual by the Cultural Terrorism Committee of the inner Adept Chamber of the HMOCA (“Third Paradise”). We are Nizari-Ismaili Esotericists; that is, Shiite heretics & fanatics who trace our spiritual line to Hassan-i Sabbah through Aladdin Mohammad III “the Madman,” seventh & last Pir of Alamut (& not through the line of the Aga Khans). We espouse radical monism & pure antinomianism, & oppose *all* forms of law & authority, in the name of Chaos.

At present, for tactical reasons, we do not advocate violence or sorcery against individuals. We call for actions against *institutions & ideas* — art-sabotage & clandestine propaganda (including ceremonial magic & “tantrik pornography”) — and especially against the poisonous media of the Empire of Lies. The Black Djinn Curse represents only a first step in the campaign of Poetic Terrorism which — we trust — will lead to other less subtle forms of insurrection.

## Special communique: A.O.A. Announces Purges in Chaos Movement

Chaos theory must of course flow *impurely*. “Lazy yokel plows a crooked furrow.” Any attempt to precipitate a crystal of ideology would result in flawed rigidities, fossilizations, armorings & drynesses which we would like to renounce, along with all “purity.” Yes, Chaos revels in a certain abandoned formlessness not unlike the erotic messiness of those we love for their shattering of habit & their unveiling of mutability. Nevertheless this looseness does not imply that Chaos Theory must accept every leech that attempts to attach itself to our sacred membranes. Certain definitions or deformations of Chaos deserve denunciation, & our dedication to divine disorder need not deter us from trashing the traitors & rip-off artists & psychic vampires now buzzing around Chaos under the impression that it’s trendy. We propose not an Inquisition in the name of *our* definitions, but rather a duel, a brawl, an act of violence or emotional repugnance, an exorcism. First we’d like to define & even name our enemies. (1) All those death-heads & mutilation artists who associate Chaos exclusively with misery, negativity & a joyless pseudo-libertinism — those who think “beyond good & evil” means doing evil — the S/M intellectuals, crooners of the apocalypse — the new Gnostic Dualists, world-haters & ugly nihilists. (2) All those scientists selling Chaos either as a force for destruction (e.g. particle-beam weapons) or as a mechanism for enforcing order, as in the use of Chaos math in statistical sociology and mob control. An attempt will be made to discover names and addresses in this category. (3) All those who appropriate Chaos in the cause of some New Age scam. Of course we have no objection to your giving us all your money, but we’ll tell you up front: we’ll use it to buy dope or fly to Morocco. You can’t sell water by the river; Chaos is that *materia* of which the alchemists spoke, which fools value more highly than gold even tho it may be found on any dungheap. The chief enemy in this category is Werner Erhardt, founder of *est*, who is now bottling “Chaos” & trying to franchise it to the Yuppoids. Second, we will list some of our friends, in order to give an idea of the disparate trends in Chaos Theory we enjoy: Chaotica, the imaginal autonomous zone discovered by Feral Faun (a.k.a. Feral Ranter); the Academy of Chaotic Arts of Tundra Wind; Joel Birnoco’s magazine *KAOS*; *Chaos Inc.*, a newsletter connected to the work of Ralph Abraham, a leading Chaos scientist; the Church of Eris; Discordian Zen; the Moorish Orthodox Church; certain clenches of the Church of the SubGenius; the Sacred Jihad of Our Lady of Perpetual Chaos; the writers associated with “type-3 anarchism” & journals like *Popular Reality*; etc. The battle lines are drawn. Chaos is not entropy, Chaos is not death, Chaos is not a commodity. Chaos is continual creation. Chaos never died.

## Post-Anarchism Anarchy

The Association for Ontological Anarchy gathers in conclave, black turbans & shimmering robes, sprawled on shirazi carpets sipping bitter coffee, smoking long chibouk & sibsi. QUESTION: What's our position on all these recent defections & desertions from anarchism (esp. in California-Land): condemn or condone? Purge them or hail them as advance-guard? Gnostic elite...or traitors?

Actually, we have a lot of sympathy for the deserters & their various critiques of anarchISM. Like Sinbad & the Horrible Old Man, anarchism staggers around with the corpse of a Martyr magically stuck to its shoulders — haunted by the legacy of failure & revolutionary masochism — stagnant backwater of lost history.

Between tragic Past & impossible Future, anarchism seems to lack a Present — as if afraid to ask itself, here & now, WHAT ARE MY TRUE DESIRES? — & what can I DO before it's *too late*?...Yes, imagine yourself confronted by a sorcerer who stares you down balefully & demands, "What is your True Desire?" Do you hem & haw, stammer, take refuge in ideological platitudes? Do you possess both Imagination & Will, can you both dream & dare — or are you the dupe of an impotent fantasy?

Look in the mirror & try it...(for one of your masks is the face of a sorcerer)...

The anarchist "movement" today contains virtually no Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans or children...even tho *in theory* such genuinely oppressed groups stand to gain the most from any anti-authoritarian revolt. Might it be that anarchISM offers no concrete program whereby the truly deprived might fulfill (or at least struggle realistically to fulfill) real needs & desires?

If so, then this failure would explain not only anarchism's lack of appeal to the poor & marginal, but also the disaffection & desertions from within its own ranks. Demos, picket-lines & reprints of 19<sup>th</sup> century classics don't add up to a vital, daring conspiracy of self-liberation. If the movement is to grow rather than shrink, a lot of deadwood will have to be jettisoned & some risky ideas embraced.

The potential exists. Any day now, vast numbers of americans are going to realize they're being force-fed a load of reactionary boring hysterical artificially-flavored *crap*. Vast chorus of groans, puking & retching...angry mobs roam the malls, smashing & looting...etc., etc. The Black Banner could provide a focus for the outrage & channel it into an insurrection of the Imagination. We could pick up the struggle where it was dropped by Situationism in '68 & Autonomia in the seventies, & carry it to the next stage. We could have revolt in our times — & in the process, we could realize many of our True Desires, even if only for a season, a brief Pirate Utopia, a warped free-zone in the old Space/Time continuum.

If the A.O.A. retains its affiliation with the "movement," we do so not merely out of a romantic predilection for lost causes — or not entirely. Of all "political systems," anarchism (despite its flaws, & precisely because it is neither political nor a system) comes closest to our understanding of reality, ontology, the nature of being. As for the deserters...we agree with their critiques, but

note that they seem to offer no new powerful alternatives. So for the time being we prefer to concentrate on changing anarchism from within. Here's our program, comrades:

1. Work on the realization that *psychic racism* has replaced overt discrimination as one of the most disgusting aspects of our society. Imaginative participation in other cultures, esp. those we live with.
2. Abandon all ideological purity. Embrace "Type-3" anarchism (to use Bob Black's pro-tem slogan): neither collectivist nor individualist. Cleanse the temple of vain idols, get rid of the Horrible Old Men, the relics & martyrologies.
3. Anti-work or "Zerowork" movement extremely important, including a radical & perhaps violent attack on Education & the serfdom of children.
4. Develop american samizdat network, replace outdated publishing/propaganda tactics. Pornography & popular entertainment as vehicles for radical re-education.
5. In music the hegemony of the 2/4 & 4/4 beat must be overthrown. We need a new music, totally insane but life-affirming, rhythmically subtle yet powerful, & we need it NOW.
6. Anarchism must wean itself away from evangelical materialism & banal 2-dimensional 19<sup>th</sup> century scientism. "Higher states of consciousness" are not mere SPOOKS invented by evil priests. The orient, the occult, the tribal cultures possess *techniques* which can be "appropriated" in true anarchist fashion. Without "higher states of consciousness," anarchism ends & dries itself up into a form of misery, a whining complaint. We need a practical kind of "mystical anarchism," devoid of all New Age shit-&-shinola, & inexorably heretical & anti-clerical; avid for all new technologies of consciousness & metanoia — a democratization of shamanism, intoxicated & serene.
7. Sexuality is under assault, obviously from the Right, more subtly from the avant-pseud "post-sexuality" movement, & even more subtly by Spectacular Recuperation in media & advertising. Time for a major step forward in SexPol awareness, an explosive reaffirmation of the polymorphic eros — (even & especially in the face of plague & gloom) — a literal glorification of the senses, a doctrine of delight. Abandon all world-hatred & shame.
8. Experiment with new tactics to replace the outdated baggage of Leftism. Emphasize practical, material & personal benefits of radical networking. The times do not appear propitious for violence or militancy, but surely a bit of sabotage & imaginative disruption is never out of place. Plot & conspire, don't bitch & moan. The Art World in particular deserves a dose of "Poetic Terrorism."
9. The despatialization of post-Industrial society provides some benefits (e.g. computer networking) but can also manifest as a form of oppression (homelessness, gentrification, architectural depersonalization, the erasure of Nature, etc.) The communes of the sixties tried to circumvent these forces but failed. The question of *land* refuses to go away. How can we separate the concept of *space* from the mechanisms of *control*? The territorial gangsters, the Nation/States, have hogged the entire map. Who can invent for us a cartography of autonomy, who can draw a map that includes our desires?



AnarchISM ultimately implies anarchy — & anarchy is chaos. Chaos is the principle of continual creation...& *Chaos never died*.  
— A.O.A. Plenary Session  
March '87, NYC

## Black Crown & Black Rose: Anarcho-Monarchism & Anarcho-Mysticism

In sleep we dream of only two forms of government — anarchy & monarchy. Primordial root consciousness understands no politics & never plays fair. A democratic dream? a socialist dream? Impossible.

Whether my REMs bring verdical near-prophetic visions or mere Viennese wish-fulfillment, only kings & wild people populate my night. Monads & nomads.

Pallid day (when nothing shines by its own light) slinks & insinuates & suggests that we compromise with a sad & lackluster reality. But in dream we are never ruled except by love or sorcery, which are the skills of chaotes & sultans.

Among a people who cannot create or play, but can only *work*, artists also know no choice but anarchy & monarchy. Like the dreamer, they must possess & *do* possess their own perceptions, & for this they must sacrifice the merely social to a “tyrannical Muse.” Art dies when treated “fairly.” It must enjoy a caveman’s wildness or else have its mouth filled with gold by some prince. Bureaucrats & sales personnel poison it, professors chew it up, & philosophers spit it out. Art is a kind of byzantine barbarity fit only for nobles & heathens. If you had known the sweetness of life as a poet in the reign of some venal, corrupt, decadent, ineffective & ridiculous Pasha or Emir, some Qajar shah, some King Farouk, some Queen of Persia, you would know that this is what every anarchist must want. How they loved poems & paintings, those dead luxurious fools, how they absorbed all roses & cool breezes, tulips & lutes! Hate their cruelty & caprice, yes — but at least they were human. The bureaucrats, however, who smear the walls of the mind with odorless filth — so kind, so *gemutlich* — who pollute the inner air with numbness — they’re not even worthy of hate. They scarcely exist outside the bloodless Ideas they serve.

And besides: the dreamer, the artist, the anarchist — do they not share some tinge of cruel caprice with the most outrageous of moghuls? Can genuine life occur without some folly, some excess, some bouts of Heraclitan “strife”? We do not rule — but we cannot & will not *be ruled*.

In Russia the Narodnik-Anarchists would sometimes forge a *ukase* or manifesto in the name of the Czar; in it the Autocrat would complain that greedy lords & unfeeling officials had sealed him in his palace & cut him off from his beloved people. He would proclaim the end of serfdom & call on peasants & workers to rise in His Name against the government.

Several times this ploy actually succeeded in sparking revolts. Why? Because the single absolute ruler acts metaphorically as a mirror for the unique and utter absoluteness of the self. Each peasant looked into this glassy legend & beheld his or her own freedom — an illusion, but one that borrowed its magic from the logic of the dream.

A similar myth must have inspired the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ranters & Antinomians & Fifth Monarchy Men who flocked to the Jacobite standard with its erudite cabals & bloodproud conspiracies. The radical mystics were betrayed first by Cromwell & then by the Restoration — why not, finally,

join with flippant cavaliers & foppish counts, with Rosicrucians & Scottish Rite Masons, to place an occult messiah on Albion's throne?

Among a people who cannot conceive human society without a monarch, the desires of radicals may be expressed in monarchical terms. Among a people who cannot conceive human existence without a religion, radical desires may speak the language of heresy.

Taoism rejected the whole of Confucian bureaucracy but retained the image of the Emperor-Sage, who would sit silent on his throne facing a propitious direction, doing absolutely nothing. In Islam the Ismailis took the idea of the Imam of the Prophet's Household & metamorphosed it into the Imam-of-one's-own-being, the perfected self who is beyond all Law & rule, who is atoned with the One. And this doctrine led them into revolt against Islam, to terror & assassination in the name of pure esoteric self-liberation & total realization.

Classical 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchism defined itself in the struggle against crown & church, & therefore on the waking level it considered itself egalitarian & atheist. This rhetoric however obscures what really happens: the "king" becomes the "anarchist," the "priest" a "heretic." In this strange duet of mutability the politician, the democrat, the socialist, the rational ideologue can find no place; they are deaf to the music & lack all sense of rhythm. Terrorist & monarch are *archetypes*; these others are mere functionaries.

Once anarch & king clutched each other's throats & waltzed a totentanz — a splendid battle. Now, however, both are relegated to history's trashbin — has-beens, curiosities of a leisurely & more cultivated past. They whirl around so fast that they seem to meld together...can they somehow have become one thing, a Siamese twin, a Janus, a freakish unity? "The sleep of Reason..." ah! most desirable & desirous monsters!

Ontological Anarchy proclaims flatly, bluntly, & almost brainlessly: yes, the two are now one. As a single entity the anarch/king now is reborn; each of us the ruler of our own flesh, our own creations — and as much of everything else as we can grab & hold.

Our actions are justified by fiat & our relations are shaped by treaties with other autarchs. We make the law for our own domains — & the chains of the law have been broken. At present perhaps we survive as mere Pretenders — but even so we may seize a few instants, a few square feet of reality over which to impose our absolute will, *our royaume. L'état, c'est moi.*

If we are bound by any ethic or morality it must be one which we ourselves have imagined, fabulously more exalted & more liberating than the "moralic acid" of puritans & humanists. "Ye are as gods" — "Thou art That."

The words *monarchism* & *mysticism* are used here in part simply *pour epater* those egalito-atheist anarchists who react with pious horror to any mention of pomp or superstition-mongering. No champagne revolutions for *them*!

Our brand of anti-authoritarianism, however, thrives on baroque paradox; it favors states of consciousness, emotion & aesthetics over all petrified ideologies & dogma; it embraces multitudes & relishes contradictions. Ontological Anarchy is a hobgoblin for BIG minds. The translation of the title (& key term) of Max Stirner's magnum opus as *The Ego & Its Own* has led to a subtle misinterpretation of "individualism." The English-Latin word *ego* comes freighted & weighed with freudian & protestant baggage. A careful reading of Stirner suggests that *The Unique & His Own-ness* would better reflect his intentions, given that he never defines the ego *in opposition to* libido or id, or in opposition to "soul" or "spirit." The Unique (*der Einzige*) might best be construed simply as the individual self.

Stirner commits no metaphysics, yet bestows on the Unique a certain absoluteness. In what way then does this *Einzige* differ from the Self of Advaita Vedanta? *Tat tvam asi*: Thou (individual Self) art That (absolute Self).

Many believe that mysticism “dissolves the ego.” Rubbish. Only death does that (or such at least is our Sadducean assumption). Nor does mysticism destroy the “carnal” or “animal” self — which would also amount to suicide. What mysticism really tries to surmount is false consciousness, illusion, Consensus Reality, & all the failures of self that accompany these ills. True mysticism creates a “self at peace,” a self with power. The highest task of metaphysics (accomplished for example by Ibn Arabi, Boehme, Ramana Maharshi) is in a sense to self-destruct, to identify metaphysical & physical, transcendent & immanent, as ONE. Certain *radical monists* have pushed this doctrine far beyond mere pantheism or religious mysticism. An apprehension of the immanent oneness of being inspires certain antinomian heresies (the Ranters, the Assassins) whom we consider our ancestors.

Stirner himself seems deaf to the possible spiritual resonances of Individualism — & in this he belongs to the 19<sup>th</sup> century: born long after the deliquescence of Christendom, but long before the discovery of the Orient & of the hidden illuminist tradition in Western alchemy, revolutionary heresy & occult activism. Stirner quite correctly despised what he knew as “mysticism,” a mere pietistic sentimentality based on self-abnegation & world hatred. Nietzsche nailed down the lid on “God” a few years later. Since then, who has dared to suggest that Individualism & mysticism might be reconciled & synthesized?

The missing ingredient in Stirner (Nietzsche comes closer) is a working concept of *nonordinary consciousness*. The realization of the unique self (or *ubermensch*) must reverberate & expand like waves or spirals or music to embrace direct experience or intuitive perception of the uniqueness of reality itself. This realization engulfs & erases all duality, dichotomy, & dialectic. It carries with itself, like an electric charge, an intense & wordless sense of *value*: it “divinizes” the self.

Being/consciousness/bliss (*satchitananda*) cannot be dismissed as merely another Stirnerian “spook” or “wheel in the head.” It invokes no exclusively transcendent principle for which the *Einzige* must sacrifice his/her own-ness. It simply states that intense awareness of existence itself results in “bliss” — or in less loaded language, “valuative consciousness.” The goal of the Unique after all is to *possess everything*; the radical monist attains this by identifying self with perception, like the Chinese inkbrush painter who “becomes the bamboo,” so that “it paints itself.”

Despite mysterious hints Stirner drops about a “union of Unique-ones” & despite Nietzsche’s eternal “Yea” & exaltation of life, their Individualism seems somehow shaped by a certain *coldness toward the other*. In part they cultivated a bracing, cleansing chilliness against the warm suffocation of 19<sup>th</sup> century sentimentality & altruism; in part they simply despised what someone (Mencken?) called “Homo Boobensis.”

And yet, reading behind & beneath the layer of ice, we uncover traces of a fiery doctrine — what Gaston Bachelard might have called “a Poetics of the Other.” The *Einzige*’s relation with the Other cannot be defined or limited by any institution or idea. And yet clearly, however paradoxically, the Unique depends for completeness on the Other, & cannot & will not be realized in any bitter isolation.

The examples of “wolf children” or *enfants sauvages* suggest that a human infant deprived of human company for too long will never attain conscious humanity — will never acquire language. The Wild Child perhaps provides a poetic metaphor for the Unique-one — and yet simultaneously

marks the precise point where Unique & Other must meet, coalesce, unify — or else fail to attain & possess all of which they are capable.

The Other mirrors the Self — the Other is our *witness*. The Other completes the Self — the Other gives us the key to the perception of oneness-of-being. When we speak of being & consciousness, we point to the Self; when we speak of bliss we implicate the Other.

The acquisition of language falls under the sign of Eros — all communication is essentially erotic, all relations are erotic. Avicenna & Dante claimed that love moves the very stars & planets in their courses — the *Rg Veda* & Hesiod's *Theogony* both proclaim Love the first god born after Chaos. Affections, affinities, aesthetic perceptions, beautiful creations, conviviality — all the most precious possessions of the Unique-one arise from the conjunction of Self & Other in the constellation of Desire.

Here again the project begun by Individualism can be evolved & revived by a graft with mysticism — specifically with tantra. As an esoteric *technique* divorced from orthodox Hinduism, tantra provides a symbolic framework ("Net of Jewels") for the identification of sexual pleasure & non-ordinary consciousness. All antinomian sects have contained some "tantrik" aspect, from the families of Love & Free Brethren & Adamites of Europe to the pederast sufis of Persia to the Taoist alchemists of China. Even classical anarchism has enjoyed its tantrik moments: Fourier's Phalansteries; the "Mystical Anarchism" of G. Ivanov & other fin-de-siècle Russian symbolists; the incestuous erotism of Arzibashaev's *Sanine*; the weird combination of Nihilism & Kali-worship which inspired the Bengali Terrorist Party (to which my tantrik guru Sri Kamanaransan Biswas had the honor of belonging)...

We, however, propose a much deeper syncretism of anarchy & tantra than any of these. In fact, we simply suggest that Individual Anarchism & Radical Monism are to be considered henceforth one and the same movement.

This hybrid has been called "spiritual materialism," a term which burns up all metaphysics in the fire of oneness of spirit & matter. We also like "Ontological Anarchy" because it suggests that being itself remains in a state of "divine Chaos," of all-potentiality, of continual creation.

In this flux only the *jiva mukti*, or "liberated individual," is self-realized, and thus monarch or owner of his perceptions and relations. In this ceaseless flow only desire offers any principle of order, and thus the only possible society (as Fourier understood) is that of lovers.

Anarchism is dead, long live anarchy! We no longer need the baggage of revolutionary masochism or idealist self-sacrifice — or the frigidity of Individualism with its disdain for conviviality, of *living together* — or the vulgar superstitions of 19<sup>th</sup> century atheism, scientism, and progressism. All that dead weight! Frowsy proletarian suitcases, heavy bourgeois steamer-trunks, boring philosophical portmanteaux — over the side with them!

We want from these systems only their vitality, their life-forces, daring, intransigence, anger, heedlessness — their power, their *shakti*. Before we jettison the rubbish and the carpetbags, we'll rifle the luggage for billfolds, revolvers, jewels, drugs and other useful items — keep what we like and trash the rest. Why not? Are we priests of a cult, to croon over relics and mumble our martyrologies?

Monarchism too has something we want — a grace, an ease, a pride, a superabundance. We'll take these, and dump the woes of authority & torture in history's garbage bin. Mysticism has something we need — "self-overcoming," exalted awareness, reservoirs of psychic potency. These we will expropriate in the name of our insurrection — and leave the woes of morality & religion to rot & decompose.

As the Ranters used to say when greeting any “fellow creature” — from king to cut-purse —  
“Rejoice! All is ours!”

# Instructions for the Kali Yuga

The Kali Yuga Still has 200,000 or so years to play — good news for advocates & avatars of CHAOS, bad news for Brahmins, Yahwists, bureaucrat-gods & their runningdogs.

I knew Darjeeling hid something for me soon as I heard the name — *dorje ling* — Thunderbolt City. In 1969 I arrived just before the monsoons. Old British hill station, summer hdqrs for Govt. of Bengal — streets in the form of winding wood staircases, the Mall with a View of Sikkim & Mt Katchenhunga — Tibetan temples & refugees — beautiful yellow-porcelain people called Lepchas (the real abo's) — Hindus, Moslems, Nepalese & Bhutanese Buddhists, & decaying Brits who lost their way home in '47, still running musty banks & tea-shoppes.

Met Ganesh Baba, fat white-bearded saddhu with overly-impeccable Oxford accent — never saw anyone smoke so much ganja, chillam after chillam full, then we'd wander the streets while he played ball with shrieking kids or picked fights in the bazaar, chasing after terrified clerks with his umbrella, then roaring with laughter.

He introduced me to Sri Kamanaransan Biswas, a tiny wispy middleage Bengali government clerk in a shabby suit, who offered to teach me Tantra. Mr Biswas lived in a tiny bungalow perched on a steep pine-tree misty hillside, where I visited him daily with pints of cheap brandy for puja & tippling — he encouraged me to smoke while we talked, since ganja too is sacred to Kali.

Mr Biswas in his wild youth was a member of the Bengali Terrorist Party, which included both Kali worshippers & heretic Moslem mystics as well as anarchists & extreme leftists. Ganesh Baba seemed to approve of this secret past, as if it were a sign of Mr Biswas's hidden tantrika strength, despite his outward seedy mild appearance.

We discussed my readings in Sir John Woodruffe ("Arthur Avalon") each afternoon, I walked there thru cold summer fogs, Tibetan spirit-traps flapping in the soaked breeze loomed out of the mist & cedars. We practiced the Tara-mantra and Tara-mudra (or Yoni-mudra), and studied the Tara-yantra diagram for magical purposes. Once we visited a temple to the Hindu Mars (like ours, both planet & war-god) where he bought a finger-ring made from an iron horseshoe nail & gave it to me. More brandy & ganja.

Tara: one of the forms of Kali, very similar in attributes: dwarfish, naked, four-armed with weapons, dancing on dead Shiva, necklace of skulls or severed heads, tongue dripping blood, skin a deep blue-grey the precise color of monsoon clouds. Every day more rain — mud-slides blocking roads. My Border Area Permit expires. Mr Biswas & I descend the slick wet Himalayas by jeep & train down to his ancestral city, Siliguri in the flat Bengali plains where the Ganges fingers into a sodden viridescent delta.

We visit his wife in the hospital. Last year a flood drowned Siliguri killing tens of thousands. Cholera broke out, the city's a wreck, algae-stained & ruined, the hospital's halls still caked with slime, blood, vomit, the liquids of death. She sits silent on her bed glaring unblinking at hideous fates. Dark side of the goddess. He gives me a colored lithograph of Tara which miraculously floated above the water & was saved.

That night we attend some ceremony at the local Kali-temple, a modest half-ruined little roadside shrine — torchlight the only illumination — chanting & drums with strange, almost African syncopation, totally unclassical, primordial & yet insanely complex. We drink, we smoke. Alone in the cemetery, next to a half-burnt corpse, I'm initiated into Tara Tantra. Next day, feverish & spaced-out, I say farewell & set out for Assam, to the great temple of Shakti's *yonis* in Gauhati, just in time for the annual festival. Assam is forbidden territory & I have no permit. Midnight in Gauhati I sneak off the train, back down the tracks thru rain & mud up to my knees & total darkness, blunder at last into the city & find a bug-ridden hotel. Sick as a dog by this time. No sleep.

In the morning, bus up to the temple on a nearby mountain. Huge towers, pullulating deities, courtyards, outbuildings — hundreds of thousands of pilgrims — weird sadhus down from their ice-caves squatting on tiger skins & chanting. Sheep & doves are being slaughtered by the thousands, a real hecatomb — (not another white sahib in sight) — gutters running inch-deep in blood — curve-bladed Kali-swords chop chop chop, dead heads pocking onto the slippery cobblestones.

When Shiva chopped Shakti into 53 pieces & scattered them over the whole Ganges basin, her cunt fell here. Some friendly priests speak English & help me find the cave where Yoni's on display. By this time I know I'm seriously sick, but determined to finish the ritual. A herd of pilgrims (all at least one head shorter than me) literally engulfs me like an undertow-wave at the beach, & hurls me suspended down suffocating winding troglodyte stairs into claustrophobic womb-cave where I swirl nauseated & hallucinating toward a shapeless cone meteorite smeared in centuries of ghee & ochre. The herd parts for me, allows me to throw a garland of jasmine over the yoni.

A week later in Kathmandu I enter the German Missionary Hospital (for a month) with hepatitis. A small price to pay for all that knowledge — the liver of some retired colonel from a Kipling story! — but I know *her*, I know Kali. Yes absolutely the archetype of all that horror, yet for those who know, she becomes the generous mother. Later in a cave in the jungle above Rishikish I meditated on Tara for several days (with mantra, yantra, mudra, incense, & flowers) & returned to the serenity of Darjeeling, its beneficent visions.

Her age must contain horrors, for most of us cannot understand her or reach beyond the necklace of skulls to the garland of jasmine, knowing in what sense they are *the same*. To go thru CHAOS, to ride it like a tiger, to embrace it (even sexually) & absorb some of its shakti, its life-juice — this is the Path of Kali Yuga. Creative nihilism. For those who follow it she promises enlightenment & even wealth, a share of her temporal *power*.

The sexuality & violence serve as metaphors in a poem which acts directly on consciousness through the Image-ination — or else in the correct circumstances they can be openly deployed & enjoyed, imbued with a sense of the holiness of *every thing* from ecstasy & wine to garbage & corpses.

Those who ignore her or see her outside themselves risk destruction. Those who worship her as *ishta-devata*, or divine self, taste her Age of Iron as if it were gold, knowing the alchemy of her presence.



# Against the Reproduction of Death

One of the signs of that End Time so many seem to anticipate would consist of a fascination with all the most negative & hateful detritus of that Time, a fascination felt by the very class of thinkers who consider themselves most perspicacious about the so-called apocalypse they warn us to beware. I'm speaking of people I know very well — those of the “spiritual right” (such as the neo-Guenonians with their obsession for signs of decadence) — & those of the post-philosophical left, the detached essayists of death, connoisseurs of the arts of mutilation.

For both these sets, all possible action in the world is smeared out onto one level plain — all become equally meaningless. For the Traditionalist, nothing matters but to prepare the soul for death (not only its own but the whole world's as well). For the “cultural critic” nothing matters but the game of identifying yet one more reason for despair, analyzing it, adding it to the catalogue.

Now the End of the World is an abstraction because it has never happened. It has no existence in the real world. It will cease to be an abstraction only when it happens — if it happens. (I do not claim to know “God's mind” on the subject — nor to possess any scientific knowledge about a still non-existent future). I see only a mental image & its emotional ramifications; as such I identify it as a kind of ghostly virus, a spook-sickness in myself which ought to be expunged rather than hypochondriacally coddled & indulged. I have come to despise the “End of the World” as an ideological icon held over my head by religion, state, & cultural milieu alike, as a reason for *doing nothing*.

I understand why the religious & political “powers” would want to keep me quaking in my shoes. Since only *they* offer even a chance of evading ragnarok (thru prayer, thru democracy, thru communism, etc.), I will sheepishly follow their dictates & dare nothing on my own. The case of the enlightened intellectuals, however, seems more puzzling at first. What power do *they* derive from this telling-the-beads of fear & gloom, sadism & hatred?

Essentially they gain *smartness*. Any attack on them must appear stupid, since they alone are clear-eyed enough to recognize the truth, they alone daring enough to *show it forth* in defiance of rude shit-kicking censors & liberal wimps. If I attack them as part of the very problem they claim to be discussing objectively, I will be seen as a bumpkin, a prude, a pollyanna. If I admit my hatred for the *artifacts* of their perception (books, artworks, performances) then I may be dismissed as merely squeamish (& so of course psychologically repressed), or else at the very least lacking in seriousness.

Many people assume that because I sometimes express myself as an anarchist boy-lover, I must also be “interested” in other ultra-postmodern ideas like serial child-murder, fascist ideology, or the photographs of Joel P. Witkin. They assume only two sides to any issue — the hip side & the unhip side. A marxist who objected to all this death-cultishness as anti-progressive would be thought as foolish as a Xtian fundamentalist who believed it immoral.

I maintain that (as usual) many sides exist to this issue rather than only two. Two-sided issues (creationism vs darwinism, “choice” vs “pro-life,” etc.) are all without exception *delusions*, spectacular lies.

My position is this: I am all too well aware of the “intelligence” which prevents action. I myself possess it in abundance. Every once in a while however I have managed to behave as if I were stupid enough to try to change my life. Sometimes I’ve used dangerous stupifiants like religion, marijuana, chaos, the love of boys. On a few occasions I have attained some degree of success — & I say this not to boast but rather to bear witness. By overthrowing the inner icons of the End of the World & the Futility of all mundane endeavor, I have (rarely) broken through into a state which (by comparison with all I’d known) appeared to be one of *health*. The images of death & mutilation which fascinate our artists & intellectuals appear to me — in the remembered light of these experiences — tragically inappropriate to the real potential of existence & of *discourse* about existence.

Existence itself may be considered an abyss possessed of no meaning. I do not read this as a *pessimistic* statement. If it be true, then I can see in it nothing else but a declaration of autonomy for my imagination & will — & for the most beautiful act they can conceive with which to *bestow* meaning upon existence.

Why should I emblemize this freedom with an act such as murder (as did the existentialists) or with any of the ghoulish tastes of the eighties? Death can only kill me once — till then I am free to express & experience (as much as I *can*) a life & an art of life based on self-valuating “peak experiences,” as well as “conviviality” (which also possesses its own reward).

The obsessive replication of Death-imagery (& its reproduction or even commodification) *gets in the way* of this project just as obstructively as censorship or media-brainwashing. It sets up negative feedback loops — it is bad juju. It helps no one conquer fear of death, but merely inculcates a *morbid* fear in place of the healthy fear all sentient creatures feel at the smell of their own mortality.

This is not to absolve the world of its ugliness, or to deny that truly fearful things exist in it. But some of these things can be overcome — on the condition that we build an *aesthetic* on the overcoming rather than the fear.

I recently attended a gay dance/poetry performance of uncompromising hipness: the one black dancer in the troupe had to pretend to fuck a dead sheep.

Part of my self-induced stupidity, I confess, is to believe (& even feel) that art can change me, & change others. That’s why I write pornography & propaganda — to cause *change*. Art can never mean as much as a love affair, perhaps, or an insurrection. But...to a certain extent...it works.

Even if I’d given up all hope in art, however, all expectation of exaltation, I would still refuse to put up with art that merely exacerbates my misery, or indulges in *schadenfreude*, “delight in the misery of others.” I turn away from certain art as a dog would turn away howling from the corpse of its companion. I’d like to renounce the sophistication which would permit me to sniff it with detached curiosity as yet another example of post-industrial decomposition.

Only the dead are truly smart, truly cool. Nothing touches them. While I live, however, I side with bumbling suffering crooked life, with anger rather than boredom, with sweet lust, hunger & carelessness...against the icy avant-guard & its fashionable premonitions of the sepulcher.

# Ringling Denunciation of Surrealism

(For Harry Smith)

At the surrealist film show, someone asked Stan Brakhage about the media's use of surrealism (MTV, etc.); he answered that it was a "damn shame." Well, maybe it is & maybe it isn't (does popular kultur *ipso facto* lack all inspiration?) — but granting that on some level the media's appropriation of surrealism is a damn shame, are we to believe that there was nothing in surrealism that allowed this theft to occur?

The return of the repressed means the return of the paleolithic — not a return *to* the Old Stone Age, but a spiralling around on a new level of the gyre. (After all, 99.9999% of human experience is of hunting/gathering, with agriculture & industry a mere oil slick on the deep well of non-history.) Paleolithic equals pre-Work ("original leisure society"). Post-Work (Zerowork) equals "Psychic Paleolithism."

All projects for the "liberation of desire" (Surrealism) which remain enmeshed in the matrix of Work can only lead to the commodification of desire. The Neolithic begins with desire for commodities (agricultural surplus), moves on to the production of desire (industry), & ends with the implosion of desire (advertising). The Surrealist liberation of desire, for all its aesthetic accomplishments, remains no more than a subset of production — hence the wholesaling of Surrealism to the Communist Party & its Work-ist ideology (not to mention attendant misogyny & homophobia). Modern leisure, in turn, is simply a subset of Work (hence its commodification) — so it is no accident that when Surrealism closed up shop, the only customers at the garage sale were ad execs.

Advertising, using Surrealism's colonization of the unconscious to *create* desire, leads to the final implosion of Surrealism. It's not just a "damn shame & a disgrace," not a simple appropriation. Surrealism was *made* for advertising, for commodification. Surrealism is in fact a betrayal of desire.

And yet, out of this abyss of meaning, desire still rises, innocent as a new-hatched phoenix. Early Berlin dada (which rejected the return of the art-object) for all its faults provides a better model for dealing with the implosion of the social than Surrealism could ever do — an anarchist model, or perhaps (in anthro-jargon) a non-authoritarian model, a destruction of all ideology, of all chains of law. As the structure of Work/Leisure crumbles into emptiness, as all forms of control vanish in the dissolution of meaning, the Neolithic seems bound to vanish as well, with all its temples & granaries & police, to be replaced by some return of hunting/gathering on the psychic level — a re-nomadization. Everything's imploding & disappearing — the oedipal family, education, even the unconscious itself (as Andr Codrescu says). Let's not mistake this for Armageddon (let's resist the seduction of apocalypse, the eschatological con) — it's not *the world* coming to an end — only the empty husks of the social, catching fire & disappearing.

Surrealism must be junked along with all the other beautiful bric-a-brac of agricultural priestcraft & vapid control-systems. No one knows what's coming, what misery, what spirit of

wildness, what joy — but the last thing we need on our voyage is another set of commissars —  
popes of our dreams — daddies. Down with Surrealism...

— Naropa, July 9, 1988

## For a Congress of Weird Religions

We've learned to distrust the verb *to be*, the word *is* — let's say rather: note the striking resemblance between the concept SATORI & the concept REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE — in both cases: a perception of the “ordinary” with extraordinary consequences for consciousness & action. We can't use the phrase “is like” because both concepts (like all concepts, all words for that matter) come crusted with accretions — each burdened with all its psycho-cultural baggage, like guests who arrive suspiciously overly well-supplied for the weekend.

So allow me the old-fashioned Beat-Zennish use of *satori*, while simultaneously emphasizing — in the case of the Situationist slogan — that one of the roots of its dialectic can be traced to dada & Surrealism's notion of the “marvelous” erupting from (or into) a life which only *seems* suffocated by the banal, by the miseries of abstraction & alienation. I define my terms by making them more vague, precisely in order to avoid the orthodoxies of both Buddhism & Situationism, to evade their ideologico-semantic traps — those broken-down language machines! Rather, I propose we ravage them for parts, an act of cultural bricolage. “Revolution” means just another turn of the crank — while religious orthodoxy of any sort leads logically to a veritable government of cranks. Let's not idolize *satori* by imagining it the monopoly of mystic monks, or as contingent on any moral code; & rather than fetishize the Leftism of '68 we prefer Stirner's term “insurrection” or “uprising,” which escapes the built-in implications of a mere change of authority.

This constellation of concepts involves “breaking rules” of ordered perception to arrive at direct experiencing, somewhat analogous to the process whereby chaos spontaneously resolves into fractal nonlinear orders, or the way in which “wild” creative energy resolves as play & *poesis*. “Spontaneous order” out of “chaos” in turn evokes the anarchist Taoism of the *Chuang Tzu*. Zen may be accused of lacking awareness of the “revolutionary” implications of *satori*, while the Situationists can be criticized for ignoring a certain “spirituality” inherent in the self-realization & conviviality their cause demands. By identifying *satori* with the r. of e.d.l. we're performing a bit of a shotgun marriage fully as remarkable as the Surrealists' famous mating of an umbrella & sewing machine or whatever it was. Miscegenation. The race-mixing advocated by Nietzsche, who was attracted, no doubt, by the sexiness of the half-caste.

I'm tempted to try to describe the way *satori* “is” like the r. of e.d.l. — but I can't. Or to put it another way: nearly all I write revolves around this theme; I would have to repeat nearly everything in order to elucidate this single point. Instead, as an appendix, I offer one more curious coincidence or interpenetration of 2 terms, one from Situationism again & the other this time from sufism. The *drive* or “drift” was conceived as an exercise in deliberate revolutionizing of everyday life — a sort of aimless wandering thru city streets, a visionary urban nomadism involving an openness to “culture as nature” (if I grasp the idea correctly) — which by its sheer duration would inculcate in the drifters a propensity to experience the marvelous; not always in its beneficent form perhaps, but hopefully always productive of insight — whether thru architecture, the erotic, adventure, drink & drugs, danger, inspiration, whatever — into the intensity of unmediated perception & experience.

The parallel term in sufism would be “journeying to the far horizons” or simply “journeying,” a spiritual exercise which combines the urban & nomadic energies of Islam into a single trajectory, sometimes called “the Caravan of Summer.” The dervish vows to travel at a certain velocity, perhaps spending no more than 7 nights or 40 nights in one city, accepting whatever comes, moving wherever signs & coincidences or simply whims may lead, heading from power-spot to power-spot, conscious of “sacred geography,” of itinerary as meaning, of topology as symbology. Here’s another constellation: Ibn Khaldun, *On the Road* (both Jack Kerouac’s & Jack London’s), the form of the picaresque novel in general, Baron Munchausen, *wanderjahr*, Marco Polo, boys in a suburban summer forest, Arthurian knights out questing for trouble, queers out cruising for boys, pub-crawling with Melville, Poe, Baudelaire — or canoeing with Thoreau in Maine...travel as the antithesis of tourism, space *rather than* time. Art project: the construction of a “map” bearing a 1:1 ratio to the “territory” explored. Political project: the construction of shifting “autonomous zones” within an invisible nomadic network (like the Rainbow Gatherings). Spiritual project: the creation or discovery of pilgrimages in which the concept “shrine” has been replaced (or esotericized) by the concept “peak experience.”

What I’m trying to do here (as usual) is to provide a sound irrational basis, a strange philosophy if you like, for what I call the Free Religions, including the Psychedelic & Discordian currents, non-hierarchical neo-paganism, antinomian heresies, chaos & Kaos Magik, revolutionary HooDoo, “unchurched” & anarchist Christians, Magical Judaism, the Moorish Orthodox Church, Church of the SubGenius, the Faeries, radical Taoists, beer mystics, people of the Herb, etc., etc.

Contrary to the expectations of 19<sup>th</sup> century radicals, religion has not gone away — perhaps we’d be better off if it had — but has instead increased in power, seemingly in proportion to the global increase in the realm of technology & rational control. Both fundamentalism & the New Age derive some force from deep & widespread dissatisfaction with the System that works against all perception of the marvelousness of everyday life — call it Babylon or the Spectacle, Capital or Empire, Society of Simulation or of soulless mechanism — what you wish. But these two religious forces divert the very desire for the authentic toward overpowering & oppressive new abstractions (morality in the case of fundamentalism, commodification in the case of the New Age), & for this reason can quite properly be called “reactionary.”

Just as cultural radicals will seek to infiltrate & subvert the popular media, & just as political radicals will perform similar functions in the spheres of Work, Family, & other social organizations, so there exists a need for radicals to penetrate the institution of religion itself rather than merely continue to mouth 19<sup>th</sup> century platitudes about atheistic materialism. It’s going to happen anyway — better to approach it with consciousness, with grace & style.

Having once lived near the Hdqrs of the World Council of Churches, I like the possibility of a Free Churches parody version — parody being one of our chief strategies (or call it *detournement* or deconstruction or creative destruction) — a sort of loose network (I dislike that word; let’s call it a “webwork” instead) of weird cults & individuals providing conversation & services for each other, out of which might begin to emerge a trend or tendency or “current” (in magical terms) strong enough to wreak some psychic havoc on the Fundies & New Agers, even the ayatollahs & the Papacy, convivial enough for us to disagree with each other & yet still give great parties — or conclaves, or ecumenical councils, or World Congresses — which we anticipate with glee.

The Free Religions may offer some of the only possible spiritual alternatives to televangelist stormtroopers & pinhead crystal-channelers (not to mention the established religions), & will thus become more & more important, more & more vital in a future where the demand for the

eruption of the marvelous into the ordinary will become the most ringing, poignant & tumultuous of all political demands — a future which will begin (wait a minute, lemme check my clock)...7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...NOW.

# Hollow Earth

Subterranean regions of the continent excavated in cyclopaeian caverns, cathedralspace fractal networks, labyrinthine gargantuan tunnels, slow black underground rivers, unmoving stygian lakes, pure & slightly luminiferous, slim waterfalls plunging down watersmooth rock, cataracting round petrified forests of stalactites & stalagmites in spelunker-bewildering blind-fish complexity & unfathomable vastness...Who dug this hollow earth beneath the ice foreseen by Poe, by certain paranoid German occultists, Shaverian UFO freaks? Was Earth once colonized in the time of Gondwana or MU by some Elder Race? their reptilian skeletons still mouldering in the farthest secret mazes of the cavern system? Sluggish backwaters, dead-end canals, stagnant pools far from the centers of civilization like Little America, Transport City, or Nan Chi Han, down in the dark recesses and boondocks of the Antarctic caves, fungus & albino fern. We suspect them of mutations, amphibian webbed fingers and toes, degenerate habits — Kallikaks of the Hollow Earth, Lovecraftian renegades, hermits, skulking incestuous smugglers, runaway criminals, anarchists forced into hiding after the Entropy Wars, fugitives from Genetic Puritanism, dissident Chinese Tongs & Yellow Turban fanatics, lascar cave-pirates, pale shiftless whitetrash from the prolewarrens of the industrial domes along Thwait's Tongue & the Walgreen Coast & Edsel-Ford-Land — the Troggs have kept alive for over 200 years the folk-memory of the Autonomous Zone, the myth that someday it will appear again...Taoism, libertine philosophy, Indonesian sorcery, cult of the Cave Mother (or Mothers), identified by some scholars with the Javanese sea/moon goddess Loro Kidul, by others with a minor deity of the South Pole Star Sect, the "Jade Goddess"...manuscripts (written in Bahasa Ingliss the pidgin dialect of the deep caves) contain mangled quotations from Nietzsche & Chuang Tzu...Trade consists of occasional precious gems and cultivation of white poppy, fungus, over a dozen different species of "magic" mushrooms...Shallow Lake Erebus, 5 miles across, dotted with stalagmitic islets choked with fern & kudzu & black dwarf pine, held in a cave so vast it sometimes creates its own weather...The town belongs officially to Little America but most of the inhabitants are Troggs living off the Shiftless Dole — & the deep-cave tribal country lies just across the Lake. Riffraff, artists, drug addicts, sorcerers, smugglers, remittance-men & perverts live in crumbling basalt-&-synthplast hotels half-encrusted with pale green vines, along the lakefront, an avenue of squalid cafes, gem emporia guarded by armed ninjas, chinese krill-noodle shops, the crystal-tinselled hall for slow fusion-gamelan dancers, boys practicing their mudras on sleepy electronic dark blue afternoons to the rippling of synthgongs and metallophones...& below the pier perhaps a few desultory bathers along the black beach, genuine low-budget tourists gawking at the shrine behind the bazaar where pallid old Trog pamongs tranced out on fungus drool & roll up their eyes, breathe in the fumes of heavy incense, everything seems suddenly menacingly bright, flickering with significance...a few cases of webbed fingers but the rumors of ritual promiscuity are true enough. I was living in a Trog fishing village across the lake from Erebus in a rented room above the baitshop...rural sloth & degenerate superstitious rites of sensual abandon, the larval & unhealthy mysteries of the chthonic mutant downtrodden Troggs, lazy shiftless no-count hicks...Little America, so christian & free of muta-



tion, eugenic & orderly, where ev-eryone lives jacked into the fleshless realm of ancient software & holography, so euclidean, newtonian, clean & patriotic — L.A. will never understand this innocent filth-sorcery, this “spiritual materialism,” this slavery to the volcanic desires of secret cave-boy gangs like laughing flowers jetting with dynamo erections pulsing up pure life curved taut as bows, & the smell of water, pond-scum, nightblooming white flowers, jasmine & datura, urine, children’s wet hair, sperm & mud...possessed by cave-spirits, perhaps ghosts of ancient aliens now wandering as demons seeking to renew long-lost pleasures of flesh & substance. Or else the Zone has already been reborn, already a nexus of autonomy, a spreading virus of chaos in its most exuberant clandestine form, white toadstools springing up on the spots where Trog boys have masturbated alone in the dark...

## Nietzsche & the Dervishes

*Rendan*, “The Clever Ones.” The sufis use a technical term *rend* (adj. *rendi*, pl. *rendan*) to designate one “clever enough to drink wine in secret without getting caught”: the dervish version of “Permissible Dissimulation” (*taqiyya*, whereby Shiites are permitted to lie about their true affiliation to avoid persecution as well as advance the purpose of their propaganda).

On the plane of the “Path,” the *rend* conceals his spiritual state (*hal*) in order to contain it, work on it alchemically, enhance it. This “cleverness” explains much of the secrecy of the Orders, altho it remains true that many dervishes do literally break the rules of Islam (*shariah*), offend tradition (*sunnah*), and flout the customs of their society — all of which gives them reason for *real* secrecy.

Ignoring the case of the “criminal” who uses sufism as a mask — or rather not sufism per se but *dervish-ism*, almost a synonym in Persia for laid-back manners & by extension a social laxness, a style of genial and poor but elegant amorality — the above definition can still be considered in a literal as well as metaphorical sense. That is: some sufis do break the Law while still allowing that the Law exists & will continue to exist; & they do so from spiritual motives, as an exercise of will (*himmah*).

Nietzsche says somewhere that the free spirit will not agitate for the rules to be dropped or even reformed, since it is only by breaking the rules that he realizes his will to power. One must prove (to oneself if no one else) an ability to overcome the rules of the herd, to make one’s own law & yet not fall prey to the rancor & resentment of inferior souls which define law & custom in ANY society. One needs, in effect, an individual equivalent of war in order to achieve the becoming of the free spirit — one needs an inert stupidity against which to measure one’s own movement & intelligence.

Anarchists sometimes posit an ideal society without law. The few anarchist experiments which succeeded briefly (the Makhnovists, Catalan) failed to survive the conditions of war which permitted their existence in the first place — so we have no way of knowing empirically if such an experiment could outlive the onset of peace.

Some anarchists, however, like our late friend the Italian Stirnerite “Brand,” took part in all sorts of uprisings and revolutions, even communist and socialist ones, because they found in the moment of insurrection itself the kind of freedom they sought. Thus while utopianism has so far always failed, the individualist or existentialist anarchists have succeeded inasmuch as they have attained (however briefly) the realization of their will to power in war.

Nietzsche’s animadversions against “anarchists” are always aimed at the egalitarian-communist narodnik martyr types, whose idealism he saw as yet one more survival of post-Xtian moralism — altho he sometimes praises them for at least having the courage to revolt against majoritarian authority. He never mentions Stirner, but I believe he would have classified the Individualist rebel with the higher types of “criminals,” who represented for him (as for Dostoyevsky) humans far superior to the herd, even if tragically flawed by their obsessiveness and perhaps hidden motivations of revenge.

The Nietzschean overman, if he existed, would have to share to some degree in this “criminality” even if he had overcome all obsessions and compulsions, if only because his law could never agree with the law of the masses, of state & society. His need for “war” (whether literal or metaphorical) might even persuade him to take part in revolt, whether it assumed the form of insurrection or only of a proud bohemianism.

For him a “society without law” might have value only so long as it could measure its own freedom against the subjection of others, against their jealousy & hatred. The lawless & short-lived “pirate utopias” of Madagascar & the Caribbean, D’Annunzio’s Republic of Fiume, the Ukraine or Barcelona — these would attract him because they promised the turmoil of becoming & even “failure” rather than the bucolic somnolence of a “perfected” (& hence dead) anarchist society.

In the absence of such opportunities, this free spirit would disdain wasting time on agitation for reform, on protest, on visionary dreaming, on all kinds of “revolutionary martyrdom” — in short, on most contemporary anarchist activity. To be *rendi*, to drink wine in secret & not get caught, to accept the rules in order to break them & thus attain the spiritual lift or energy-rush of danger & adventure, the private epiphany of overcoming all interior police while tricking all outward authority — this might be a goal worthy of such a spirit, & this might be his definition of crime.

(Incidentally, I think this reading helps explain N’s insistence on the MASK, on the secretive nature of the proto-overman, which disturbs even intelligent but somewhat liberal commentators like Kaufman. Artists, for all that N loves them, are criticized for *telling secrets*. Perhaps he failed to consider that — paraphrasing A. Ginsberg — this is *our* way of becoming “great”; and also that — paraphrasing Yeats — even the truest secret becomes yet another mask.)

As for the anarchist movement today: would we like just once to stand on ground where laws are abolished & the last priest is strung up with the guts of the last bureaucrat? Yeah sure. But we’re not holding our breath. There are certain causes (to quote the Neech again) that one fails to quite abandon, if only because of the sheer insipidity of all their enemies. Oscar Wilde might have said that one cannot be a gentleman without being something of an anarchist — a necessary paradox, like N’s “radical aristocratism.”

This is not just a matter of spiritual dandyism, but also of existential commitment to an underlying spontaneity, to a philosophical “tao.” For all its waste of energy, in its very formlessness, anarchism alone of all the ISMs approaches that one *type* of form which alone can interest us today, that strange attractor, the shape of *chaos* — which (one last quote) one must have within oneself, if one is to give birth to a dancing star.

— Spring Equinox, 1989

## Resolution for the 1990's: Boycott Cop Culture!!!

If one fictional figure can be said to have dominated the popcult of the eighties, it was the Cop. Fuckin' police everywhere you turned, worse than real life. What an incredible bore.

Powerful Cops — protecting the meek and humble — at the expense of a half-dozen or so articles of the Bill of Rights — “Dirty Harry.” Nice human cops, coping with human perversity, coming out sweet ‘n’ sour, you know, gruff & knowing but still soft inside — *Hill Street Blues* — most evil TV show ever. Wiseass black cops scoring witty racist remarks against hick white cops, who nevertheless come to love each other — Eddie Murphy, *Class Traitor*. For that masochist thrill we got wicked bent cops who threaten to topple our Kozy Konsensus Reality from within like Giger-designed tapeworms, but naturally get blown away just in the nick of time by the Last Honest Cop, Robocop, ideal amalgam of prosthesis and sentimentality.

We've been obsessed with cops since the beginning — but the rozzers of yore played bumbling fools, Keystone Kops, *Car 54 Where Are You*, booby-bobbies set up for Fatty Arbuckle or Buster Keaton to squash & deflate. But in the ideal drama of the eighties, the “little man” who once scattered bluebottles by the hundred with that anarchist's bomb, innocently used to light a cigarette — the Tramp, the victim with the sudden power of the pure heart — no longer has a place at the center of narrative. Once “we” were that hobo, that quasi-surrealist chaote hero who wins thru *wu-wei* over the ludicrous minions of a despised & irrelevant Order. But now “we” are reduced to the status of victims *without* power, or else criminals. “We” no longer occupy that central role; no longer the heros of our own stories, we've been marginalized & replaced by the Other, the Cop.

Thus the Cop Show has only three characters — victim, criminal, and policeperson — but the first two fail to be fully human — only the pig is *real*. Oddly enough, human society in the eighties (as seen in the other media) sometimes appeared to consist of the same three cliché/archetypes. First the victims, the whining minorities bitching about “rights” — and who pray tell did *not* belong to a “minority” in the eighties? Shit, even cops complained about their “rights” being abused. Then the criminals: largely non-white (despite the obligatory & hallucinatory “integration” of the media), largely poor (or else obscenely rich, hence even more alien), largely perverse (i.e. the forbidden mirrors of “our” desires). I've heard that one out of four households in America is robbed every year, & that every year nearly half a million of us are arrested just for smoking pot. In the face of such statistics (even assuming they're “damned lies”) one wonders who is NOT either victim or criminal in our police-state-of-consciousness. The fuzz must mediate for *all of us*, however fuzzy the interface — they're only warrior-priests, however profane. *America's Most Wanted* — the most successful TV game show of the eighties — opened up for all of us the role of Amateur Cop, hitherto merely a media fantasy of middleclass resentment & revenge. Naturally the truelife Cop hates no one so much as the vigilante — look what happens to poor &/or non-white neighborhood self-protection groups like the Muslims who tried to eliminate crack dealing in Brooklyn: the cops busted the Muslims, the pushers went free. Real vigilantes threaten the monopoly of enforcement, *lèse majesté* vigilantes function perfectly within the CopState; in

fact, it would be more accurate to think of them as *unpaid* (not even a set of matched luggage!) *informers*: telemetric snitches, electro-stoolies, ratfinks-for-a-day.

What is it that “America most wants”? Does this phrase refer to criminals — or to crimes, to objects of desire in their real presence, unrepresented, unmediated, literally stolen & appropriated? America most wants...to fuck off work, ditch the spouse, do drugs (because only drugs make you feel as good as the people in TV ads appear to be), have sex with nubile jailbait, sodomy, burglary, hell yes. What unmediated pleasures are NOT illegal? Even outdoor barbecues violate smoke ordinances nowadays. The simplest enjoyments turn us against some law; finally pleasure becomes too stress-inducing, and only TV remains — and the pleasure of revenge, vicarious betrayal, the sick thrill of the tattletale. America can’t have what it most wants, so it has *America’s Most Wanted* instead. A nation of schoolyard toadies sucking up to an elite of schoolyard bullies.

Of course the program still suffers from a few strange reality-glitches: for example, the dramatized segments are enacted cinema verité style by *actors*; some viewers are so stupid they believe they’re seeing actual footage of real crimes. Hence the actors are being continually harassed & even arrested, along with (or instead of) the real criminals whose mugshots are flashed after each little documentoid. How quaint, eh? No one really experiences anything — everyone reduced to the status of ghosts — media-images break off & float away from any contact with actual everyday life — PhoneSex — CyberSex. Final transcendence of the body: cybergnosis.

The media cops, like televangelical forerunners, prepare us for the advent, final coming or Rapture of the police state: the “Wars” on sex and drugs: total control totally leached of all content; a map with no coordinates in any known space; far beyond mere Spectacle; sheer ecstasy (“standing-outside-the-body”); obscene simulacrum; meaningless violent spasms elevated to the last principle of governance. Image of a country consumed by images of self-hatred, war between the schizoid halves of a split personality, Super-Ego vs the Id Kid, for the heavyweight championship of an abandoned landscape, burnt, polluted, empty, desolate, unreal. Just as the murder-mystery is always an exercise in sadism, so the cop-fiction always involves the contemplation of *control*. The image of the inspector or detective measures the image of “our” lack of autonomous substance, our transparency before the gaze of authority. Our perversity, our helplessness. Whether we imagine them as “good” or “evil,” our obsessive invocation of the eidolons of the Cops reveals the extent to which we have accepted the manichaeian worldview they symbolize. Millions of tiny cops swarm everywhere, like the qliploth, larval hungry ghosts — they fill the screen, as in Keaton’s famous two-reeler, overwhelming the foreground, an Antarctic where nothing moves but hordes of sinister blue penguins.

We propose an esoteric hermeneutical exegesis of the Surrealist slogan “*Mort aux vaches!*” We take it to refer not to the deaths of individual cops (“cows” in the argot of the period) — mere leftist revenge fantasy — petty reverse sadism — but rather to the death of the *image* of the *flic*, the inner Control & its myriad reflections in the NoPlace Place of the media — the “gray room” as Burroughs calls it. Self-censorship, fear of one’s own desires, “conscience” as the interiorized voice of consensus-authority. To assassinate these “security forces” would indeed release floods of libidinal energy, but not the violent running-amok predicted by the theory of Law ‘n’ Order.

Nietzschean “self-overcoming” provides the principle of organization for the free spirit (as also for anarchist society, at least in theory). In the police-state personality, libidinal energy is dammed & diverted toward self-repression; any threat to Control results in spasms of violence. In the free-spirit personality, energy flows unimpeded & therefore turbulently but gently — its chaos finds its strange attractor, allowing new spontaneous orders to emerge.

In this sense, then, we call for a boycott of the image of the Cop, & a moratorium on its production in art. In this sense...

*MORT AUX VACHES!*

# **The Temporary Autonomous Zone**

“...this time however I come as the victorious Dionysus, who will turn the world into a holiday...Not that I have much time...”

— Nietzsche (from his last “insane” letter to Cosima Wagner)



# Pirate Utopias

The sea-rovers and corsairs of the 18<sup>th</sup> century created an “information network” that spanned the globe: primitive and devoted primarily to grim business, the net nevertheless functioned admirably. Scattered throughout the net were islands, remote hideouts where ships could be watered and provisioned, booty traded for luxuries and necessities. Some of these islands supported “intentional communities,” whole mini-societies living consciously outside the law and determined to keep it up, even if only for a short but merry life.

Some years ago I looked through a lot of secondary material on piracy hoping to find a study of these enclaves — but it appeared as if no historian has yet found them worthy of analysis. (William Burroughs has mentioned the subject, as did the late British anarchist Larry Law — but no systematic research has been carried out.) I retreated to primary sources and constructed my own theory, some aspects of which will be discussed in this essay. I called the settlements “Pirate Utopias.”

Recently Bruce Sterling, one of the leading exponents of Cyberpunk science fiction, published a near-future romance based on the assumption that the decay of political systems will lead to a decentralized proliferation of experiments in living: giant worker-owned corporations, independent enclaves devoted to “data piracy,” Green-Social-Democrat enclaves, Zerowork enclaves, anarchist liberated zones, etc. The information economy which supports this diversity is called the Net; the enclaves (and the book’s title) are *Islands in the Net*.

The medieval Assassins founded a “State” which consisted of a network of remote mountain valleys and castles, separated by thousands of miles, strategically invulnerable to invasion, connected by the information flow of secret agents, at war with all governments, and devoted only to knowledge. Modern technology, culminating in the spy satellite, makes this kind of *autonomy* a romantic dream. No more pirate islands! In the future the same technology — freed from all political control — could make possible an entire world of *autonomous zones*. But for now the concept remains precisely science fiction — pure speculation.

Are we who live in the present doomed never to experience autonomy, never to stand for one moment on a bit of land ruled only by freedom? Are we reduced either to nostalgia for the past or nostalgia for the future? Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom? Logic and emotion unite to condemn such a supposition. Reason demands that one cannot struggle for what one does not know; and the heart revolts at a universe so cruel as to visit such injustices on *our* generation alone of humankind.

To say that “I will not be free till all humans (or all sentient creatures) are free” is simply to cave in to a kind of nirvana-stupor, to abdicate our humanity, to define ourselves as losers.

I believe that by extrapolating from past and future stories about “islands in the net” we may collect evidence to suggest that a certain kind of “free enclave” is not only possible in our time but also existent. All my research and speculation has crystallized around the concept of the TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE (hereafter abbreviated TAZ). Despite its synthesizing force for my own thinking, however, I don’t intend the TAZ to be taken as more than an *essay* (“attempt”), a

suggestion, almost a poetic fancy. Despite the occasional Ranterish enthusiasm of my language I am not trying to construct political dogma. In fact I have deliberately refrained from defining the TAZ — I circle around the subject, firing off exploratory beams. In the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory. If the phrase became current it would be understood without difficulty...understood in action.

# Waiting for the Revolution

How is it that “the world turned upside-down” always manages to *Right* itself? Why does reaction always follow revolution, like seasons in Hell?

*Uprising*, or the Latin form *insurrection*, are words used by historians to label *failed* revolutions — movements which do not match the expected curve, the consensus-approved trajectory: revolution, reaction, betrayal, the founding of a stronger and even more oppressive State — the turning of the wheel, the return of history again and again to its highest form: jackboot on the face of humanity forever.

By failing to follow this curve, the *up-rising* suggests the possibility of a movement outside and beyond the Hegelian spiral of that “progress” which is secretly nothing more than a vicious circle. *Surgo* — rise up, surge. *Insurgo* — rise up, raise oneself up. A bootstrap operation. A goodbye to that wretched parody of the karmic round, historical revolutionary futility. The slogan “Revolution!” has mutated from tocsin to toxin, a malign pseudo-Gnostic fate-trap, a nightmare where no matter how we struggle we never escape that evil Aeon, that incubus the State, one State after another, every “heaven” ruled by yet one more evil angel.

If History IS “Time,” as it claims to be, then the uprising is a moment that springs up and out of Time, violates the “law” of History. If the State IS History, as it claims to be, then the insurrection is the forbidden moment, an unforgivable denial of the dialectic — shimmying up the pole and out of the smokehole, a shaman’s maneuver carried out at an “impossible angle” to the universe. History says the Revolution attains “permanence,” or at least duration, while the uprising is “temporary.” In this sense an uprising is like a “peak experience” as opposed to the standard of “ordinary” consciousness and experience. Like festivals, uprisings cannot happen every day — otherwise they would not be “nonordinary.” But such moments of intensity give shape and meaning to the entirety of a life. The shaman returns — you can’t stay up on the roof forever — but things have changed, shifts and integrations have occurred — a *difference* is made.

You will argue that this is a counsel of despair. What of the anarchist dream, the Stateless state, the Commune, the autonomous zone with *duration*, a free society, a free *culture*? Are we to abandon that hope in return for some existentialist *acte gratuit*? The point is not to change consciousness but to change the world.

I accept this as a fair criticism. I’d make two rejoinders nevertheless; first, *revolution* has never yet resulted in achieving this dream. The vision comes to life in the moment of uprising — but as soon as “the Revolution” triumphs and the State returns, the dream and the ideal are *already* betrayed. I have not given up hope or even expectation of change — but I distrust the word *Revolution*. Second, even if we replace the revolutionary approach with a concept of *insurrection blossoming spontaneously into anarchist culture*, our own particular historical situation is not propitious for such a vast undertaking. Absolutely nothing but a futile martyrdom could possibly result now from a head-on collision with the terminal State, the megacorporate information State, the empire of Spectacle and Simulation. Its guns are all pointed at us, while our meager weaponry finds nothing to aim at but a hysteresis, a rigid vacuity, a Spook capable of smothering

every spark in an ectoplasm of information, a society of capitulation ruled by the image of the Cop and the absorbant eye of the TV screen.

In short, we're not touting the TAZ as an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics, and goals. We recommend it because it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can "occupy" these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace. Perhaps certain small TAZs have lasted whole lifetimes because they went unnoticed, like hillbilly enclaves — because they never intersected with the Spectacle, never appeared outside that real life which is invisible to the agents of Simulation.

Babylon takes its abstractions for realities; precisely *within* this margin of error the TAZ can come into existence. Getting the TAZ started may involve tactics of violence and defense, but its greatest strength lies in its invisibility — the State cannot recognize it because History has no definition of it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it *will* vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible because undefinable in terms of the Spectacle. The TAZ is thus a perfect tactic for an era in which the State is omnipresent and all-powerful and yet simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies. And because the TAZ is a microcosm of that "anarchist dream" of a free culture, I can think of no better tactic by which to work toward that goal while at the same time experiencing some of its benefits here and now.

In sum, realism demands not only that we give up *waiting* for "the Revolution" but also that we give up *wanting* it. "Uprising," yes — as often as possible and even at the risk of violence. The *spasming* of the Simulated State will be "spectacular," but in most cases the best and most radical tactic will be to refuse to engage in spectacular violence, to *withdraw* from the area of simulation, to disappear.

The TAZ is an encampment of guerilla ontologists: strike and run away. Keep moving the entire tribe, even if it's only data in the Web. The TAZ must be capable of defense; but both the "strike" and the "defense" should, if possible, evade the violence of the State, which is no longer a *meaningful* violence. The strike is made at structures of control, essentially at ideas; the defense is "invisibility," a *martial art*, and "invulnerability" — an "occult" art within the martial arts. The "nomadic war machine" conquers without being noticed and moves on before the map can be adjusted. As to the future — Only the autonomous can *plan* autonomy, organize for it, create it. It's a bootstrap operation. The first step is somewhat akin to *satori* — the realization that the TAZ begins with a simple act of realization.

(Note: See Appendix C, quote by Renzo Novatore)

# The Psychotopology of Everyday Life

The concept of the TAZ arises first out of a critique of Revolution, and an appreciation of the Insurrection. The former labels the latter a failure; but for us *uprising* represents a far more interesting possibility, from the standard of a psychology of liberation, than all the “successful” revolutions of bourgeoisie, communists, fascists, etc.

The second generating force behind the TAZ springs from the historical development I call “the closure of the map.” The last bit of Earth unclaimed by any nation-state was eaten up in 1899. Ours is the first century without *terra incognita*, without a frontier. Nationality is the highest principle of world governance — not one speck of rock in the South Seas can be left *open*, not one remote valley, not even the Moon and planets. This is the apotheosis of “territorial gangsterism.” Not one square inch of Earth goes unpoliced or untaxed...in theory.

The “map” is a political abstract grid, a gigantic *con* enforced by the carrot/stick conditioning of the “Expert” State, until for most of us the map *becomes* the territory — no longer “Turtle Island,” but “the USA.” And yet because the map is an abstraction it cannot cover Earth with 1:1 accuracy. Within the fractal complexities of actual geography the map can see only dimensional grids. Hidden enfolded immensities escape the measuring rod. The map is not accurate; the map *cannot* be accurate.

So — Revolution is closed, but insurgency is open. For the time being we concentrate our force on temporary “power surges,” avoiding all entanglements with “permanent solutions.”

And — the map is closed, but the autonomous zone is open. Metaphorically it unfolds within the fractal dimensions invisible to the cartography of Control. And here we should introduce the concept of psychotopology (and -topography) as an alternative “science” to that of the State’s surveying and mapmaking and “psychic imperialism.” Only psychotopography can draw 1:1 maps of reality because only the human mind provides sufficient complexity to model the real. But a 1:1 map cannot “control” its territory because it is virtually identical with its territory. It can only be used to *suggest*, in a sense *gesture towards*, certain features. We are looking for “spaces” (geographic, social, cultural, imaginal) with potential to flower as autonomous zones — and we are looking for times in which these spaces are relatively open, either through neglect on the part of the State or because they have somehow escaped notice by the mapmakers, or for whatever reason. Psychotopology is the art of *dowsing* for potential TAZs.

The closures of Revolution and of the map, however, are only the negative sources of the TAZ; much remains to be said of its positive inspirations. Reaction alone cannot provide the energy needed to “manifest” a TAZ. An uprising must be *for* something as well.

1. First, we can speak of a natural anthropology of the TAZ. The nuclear family is the base unit of consensus society, but not of the TAZ. (“Families! — how I hate them! the misers of love!” — Gide) The nuclear family, with its attendant “oedipal miseries,” appears to have been a Neolithic invention, a response to the “agricultural revolution” with its imposed scarcity and its imposed hierarchy. The Paleolithic model is at once more primal and more radical: the *band*. The typical hunter/gatherer nomadic or semi-nomadic band consists of about 50 people. Within larger tribal

societies the band-structure is fulfilled by clans within the tribe, or by sodalities such as initiatic or secret societies, hunt or war societies, gender societies, “children’s republics,” and so on. If the nuclear family is produced by scarcity (and results in miserliness), the band is produced by abundance — and results in prodigality. The family is *closed*, by genetics, by the male’s *possession* of women and children, by the hierarchic totality of agricultural/industrial society. The band is *open* — not to everyone, of course, but to the affinity group, the initiates sworn to a bond of love. The band is not part of a larger hierarchy, but rather part of a horizontal pattern of custom, extended kinship, contract and alliance, spiritual affinities, etc. (American Indian society preserves certain aspects of this structure even now.)

In our own post-Spectacular Society of Simulation many forces are working — largely invisibly — to phase out the nuclear family and bring back the band. Breakdowns in the structure of Work resonate in the shattered “stability” of the unit-home and unit-family. One’s “band” nowadays includes friends, ex-spouses and lovers, people met at different jobs and pow-wows, affinity groups, special interest networks, mail networks, etc. The nuclear family becomes more and more obviously a *trap*, a cultural sinkhole, a neurotic secret implosion of split atoms — and the obvious counter-strategy emerges spontaneously in the almost unconscious rediscovery of the more archaic and yet more post-industrial possibility of the band.

2. The TAZ as *festival*. Stephen Pearl Andrews once offered, as an image of anarchist society, the *dinner party*, in which all structure of authority dissolves in conviviality and celebration (see Appendix C). Here we might also invoke Fourier and his concept of the senses as the basis of social becoming — “touch-rut” and “gastrosophy,” and his paean to the neglected implications of smell and taste. The ancient concepts of jubilee and saturnalia originate in an intuition that certain events lie outside the scope of “profane time,” the measuring-rod of the State and of History. These holidays literally occupied gaps in the calendar — *intercalary intervals*. By the Middle Ages, nearly a third of the year was given over to holidays. Perhaps the riots against calendar reform had less to do with the “eleven lost days” than with a sense that imperial science was conspiring to close up these gaps in the calendar where the people’s freedoms had accumulated — a coup d’etat, a mapping of the year, a seizure of time itself, turning the organic cosmos into a clockwork universe. The death of the festival.

Participants in insurrection invariably note its festive aspects, even in the midst of armed struggle, danger, and risk. The uprising is like a saturnalia which has slipped loose (or been forced to vanish) from its intercalary interval and is now at liberty to pop up anywhere or when. Freed of time and place, it nevertheless possesses a nose for the ripeness of events, and an affinity for the *genius loci*; the science of psychotopology indicates “flows of forces” and “spots of power” (to borrow occultist metaphors) which localize the TAZ spatio-temporally, or at least help to define its relation to moment and locale.

The media invite us to “come celebrate the moments of your life” with the spurious unification of commodity and spectacle, the famous *non-event* of pure representation. In response to this obscenity we have, on the one hand, the spectrum of *refusal* (chronicled by the Situationists, John Zerzan, Bob Black *et al.*) — and on the other hand, the emergence of a *festal culture* removed and even hidden from the would-be managers of our leisure. “Fight for the right to party” is in fact not a parody of the radical struggle but a new manifestation of it, appropriate to an age which offers TVs and telephones as ways to “reach out and touch” other human beings, ways to “Be There!”

Pearl Andrews was right: the dinner party is already “the seed of the new society taking shape within the shell of the old” (IWW Preamble). The sixties-style “tribal gathering,” the forest conclave of eco-saboteurs, the idyllic Beltane of the neo-pagans, anarchist conferences, gay faery circles...Harlem rent parties of the twenties, nightclubs, banquets, old-time libertarian picnics — we should realize that all these are already “liberated zones” of a sort, or at least potential TAZs. Whether open only to a few friends, like a dinner party, or to thousands of celebrants, like a Be-In, the party is always “open” because it is not “ordered”; it may be planned, but unless it “happens” it’s a failure. The element of spontaneity is crucial.

The essence of the party: face-to-face, a group of humans synergize their efforts to realize mutual desires, whether for good food and cheer, dance, conversation, the arts of life; perhaps even for erotic pleasure, or to create a communal artwork, or to attain the very transport of bliss — in short, a “union of egoists” (as Stirner put it) in its simplest form — or else, in Kropotkin’s terms, a basic biological drive to “mutual aid.” (Here we should also mention Bataille’s “economy of excess” and his theory of potlatch culture.)

3. Vital in shaping TAZ reality is the concept of *psychic nomadism* (or as we jokingly call it, “rootless cosmopolitanism”). Aspects of this phenomenon have been discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Nomadology and the War Machine*, by Lyotard in *Driftworks* and by various authors in the “Oasis” issue of *Semiotext(e)*. We use the term “psychic nomadism” here rather than “urban nomadism,” “nomadology,” “driftwork,” etc., simply in order to garner all these concepts into a single loose complex, to be studied in light of the coming-into-being of the TAZ. “The death of God,” in some ways a de-centering of the entire “European” project, opened a multi-perspectived post-ideological worldview able to move “rootlessly” from philosophy to tribal myth, from natural science to Taoism — able to see for the first time through eyes like some golden insect’s, each facet giving a view of an entirely other world.

But this vision was attained at the expense of inhabiting an epoch where speed and “commodity fetishism” have created a tyrannical false unity which tends to blur all cultural diversity and individuality, so that “one place is as good as another.” This paradox creates “gypsies,” psychic travellers driven by desire or curiosity, wanderers with shallow loyalties (in fact disloyal to the “European Project” which has lost all its charm and vitality), not tied down to any particular time and place, in search of diversity and adventure...This description covers not only the X-class artists and intellectuals but also migrant laborers, refugees, the “homeless,” tourists, the RV and mobile-home culture — also people who “travel” via the Net, but may never leave their own rooms (or those like Thoreau who “have travelled much — in Concord”); and finally it includes “everybody,” all of us, living through our automobiles, our vacations, our TVs, books, movies, telephones, changing jobs, changing “lifestyles,” religions, diets, etc., etc.

Psychic nomadism as a *tactic*, what Deleuze & Guattari metaphorically call “the war machine,” shifts the paradox from a passive to an active and perhaps even “violent” mode. “God”’s last throes and deathbed rattles have been going on for such a long time — in the form of Capitalism, Fascism, and Communism, for example — that there’s still a lot of “creative destruction” to be carried out by post-Bakuninist post-Nietzschean commandos or *apaches* (literally “enemies”) of the old Consensus. These nomads practice the *razzia*, they are corsairs, they are viruses; they have both need and desire for TAZs, camps of black tents under the desert stars, interzones, hidden fortified oases along secret caravan routes, “liberated” bits of jungle and bad-land, no-go areas, black markets, and underground bazaars.

These nomads chart their courses by strange stars, which might be luminous clusters of data in cyberspace, or perhaps hallucinations. Lay down a map of the land; over that, set a map of political change; over that, a map of the Net, especially the counter-Net with its emphasis on clandestine information-flow and logistics — and finally, over all, the 1:1 map of the creative imagination, aesthetics, values. The resultant grid comes to life, animated by unexpected eddies and surges of energy, coagulations of light, secret tunnels, surprises.



# The Net and the Web

The next factor contributing to the TAZ is so vast and ambiguous that it needs a section unto itself.

We've spoken of the *Net*, which can be defined as the totality of all information and communication transfer. Some of these transfers are privileged and limited to various elites, which gives the Net a hierarchic aspect. Other transactions are open to all — so the Net has a horizontal or non-hierarchic aspect as well. Military and Intelligence data are restricted, as are banking and currency information and the like. But for the most part the telephone, the postal system, public data banks, etc. are accessible to everyone and anyone. Thus *within the Net* there has begun to emerge a shadowy sort of *counter-Net*, which we will call the *Web* (as if the Net were a fishing-net and the Web were spider-webs woven through the interstices and broken sections of the Net). Generally we'll use the term *Web* to refer to the alternate horizontal open structure of info-exchange, the non-hierarchic network, and reserve the term *counter-Net* to indicate clandestine illegal and rebellious use of the Web, including actual data-piracy and other forms of leeching off the Net itself. Net, Web, and counter-Net are all parts of the same whole pattern-complex — they blur into each other at innumerable points. The terms are not meant to define areas but to suggest tendencies.

(Digression: Before you condemn the Web or counter-Net for its "parasitism," which can never be a truly revolutionary force, ask yourself what "production" consists of in the Age of Simulation. What is the "productive class"? Perhaps you'll be forced to admit that these terms seem to have lost their meaning. In any case the answers to such questions are so complex that the TAZ tends to ignore them altogether and simply picks up what it can *use*. "Culture is our Nature" — and we are the thieving magpies, or the hunter/gatherers of the world of CommTech.)

The present forms of the unofficial Web are, one must suppose, still rather primitive: the marginal zine network, the BBS networks, pirated software, hacking, phone-phreaking, some influence in print and radio, almost none in the other big media — no TV stations, no satellites, no fiber-optics, no cable, etc., etc. However the Net itself presents a pattern of changing/evolving relations between subjects ("users") and objects ("data"). The nature of these relations has been exhaustively explored, from McLuhan to Virilio. It would take pages and pages to "prove" what by now "everyone knows." Rather than rehash it all, I am interested in asking how these evolving relations suggest modes of implementation for the TAZ.

The TAZ has a temporary but actual location in time and a temporary but actual location in space. But clearly it must also have "location" *in the Web*, and this location is of a different sort, not actual but virtual, not immediate but instantaneous. The Web not only provides logistical support for the TAZ, it also helps to bring it into being; crudely speaking one might say that the TAZ "exists" in information-space as well as in the "real world." The Web can compact a great deal of time, as data, into an infinitesimal "space." We have noted that the TAZ, because it is temporary, must necessarily lack some of the advantages of a freedom which experiences *duration* and a more-or-less fixed *locale*. But the Web can provide a kind of substitute for some

of this duration and locale — it can *inform* the TAZ, from its inception, with vast amounts of compacted time and space which have been “subtilized” as data.

At this moment in the evolution of the Web, and considering our demands for the “face-to-face” and the sensual, we must consider the Web primarily as a support system, capable of carrying information from one TAZ to another, of defending the TAZ, rendering it “invisible” or giving it teeth, as the situation might demand. But more than that: If the TAZ is a nomad camp, then the Web helps provide the epics, songs, genealogies and legends of the tribe; it provides the secret caravan routes and raiding trails which make up the flowlines of tribal economy; it even *contains* some of the very roads they will follow, some of the very dreams they will experience as signs and portents.

The Web does not depend for its existence on any computer technology. Word-of-mouth, mail, the marginal zine network, “phone trees,” and the like already suffice to construct an information webwork. The key is not the brand or level of tech involved, but the openness and horizontality of the structure. Nevertheless, the whole concept of the Net *implies* the use of computers. In the SciFi imagination the Net is headed for the condition of Cyberspace (as in *Tron* or *Neuromancer*) and the pseudo-telepathy of “virtual reality.” As a Cyberpunk fan I can’t help but envision “reality hacking” playing a major role in the creation of TAZs. Like Gibson and Sterling I am assuming that the official Net will never succeed in shutting down the Web or the counter-Net — that data-piracy, unauthorized transmissions and the free flow of information can never be frozen. (In fact, as I understand it, chaos theory *predicts* that any universal Control-system is impossible.)

However, leaving aside all mere speculation about the future, we must face a very serious question about the Web and the tech it involves. The TAZ desires above all to avoid *mediation*, to experience its existence as *immediate*. The very essence of the affair is “breast-to-breast” as the sufis say, or face-to-face. But, BUT: the very essence of the Web is mediation. Machines here are our ambassadors — the flesh is irrelevant except as a *terminal*, with all the sinister connotations of the term.

The TAZ may perhaps best find its own space by wrapping its head around two seemingly contradictory attitudes toward Hi-Tech and its apotheosis the Net: (1) what we might call the *Fifth Estate*/Neo-Paleolithic Post-Situ Ultra-Green position, which construes itself as a luddite argument against mediation and against the Net; and (2) the Cyberpunk utopianists, futuro-libertarians, Reality Hackers and their allies who see the Net as a step forward in evolution, and who assume that any possible ill effects of mediation can be overcome — at least, once we’ve liberated the means of production.

The TAZ agrees with the hackers because it wants to come into being — in part — through the Net, even through the mediation of the Net. But it also agrees with the greens because it retains intense awareness of itself as *body* and feels only revulsion for *CyberGnosis*, the attempt to transcend the body through instantaneity and simulation. The TAZ tends to view the Tech/anti-Tech dichotomy as misleading, like most dichotomies, in which apparent opposites turn out to be falsifications or even hallucinations caused by semantics. This is a way of saying that the TAZ wants to live in *this* world, not in the idea of another world, some visionary world born of false unification (*all green OR all metal*) which can only be more pie in the sky by-&-by (or as Alice put it, “Jam yesterday or jam tomorrow, but never jam today”).

The TAZ is “utopian” in the sense that it envisions an *intensification* of everyday life, or as the Surrealists might have said, life’s penetration by the Marvelous. But it cannot be utopian in the actual meaning of the word, *nowhere*, or NoPlace Place. *The TAZ is somewhere*. It lies at the

intersection of many forces, like some pagan power-spot at the junction of mysterious ley-lines, visible to the adept in seemingly unrelated bits of terrain, landscape, flows of air, water, animals. But now the lines are not all etched in time and space. Some of them exist only “within” the Web, even though they also intersect with real times and places. Perhaps some of the lines are “non-ordinary” in the sense that no convention for quantifying them exists. These lines might better be studied in the light of chaos science than of sociology, statistics, economics, etc. The patterns of force which bring the TAZ into being have something in common with those chaotic “Strange Attractors” which exist, so to speak, *between* the dimensions.

The TAZ by its very nature seizes every available means to realize itself — it will come to life whether in a cave or an L-5 Space City — but above all it will live, now, or as soon as possible, in however suspect or ramshackle a form, spontaneously, without regard for ideology or even anti-ideology. It will use the computer because the computer exists, but it will also use powers which are so completely unrelated to alienation or simulation that they guarantee a certain *psychic paleolithism* to the TAZ, a primordial-shamanic spirit which will “infect” even the Net itself (the true meaning of Cyberpunk as I read it). Because the TAZ is an intensification, a surplus, an excess, a potlatch, life spending itself in living rather than merely *surviving* (that snivelling shibboleth of the eighties), it cannot be defined either by Tech or anti-Tech. It contradicts itself like a true despiser of hobgoblins, because it wills itself to be, at any cost in damage to “perfection,” to the immobility of the final.

In the Mandelbrot Set and its computer-graphic realization we watch — in a fractal universe — maps which are embedded and in fact hidden within maps within maps etc. to the limits of computational power. What is it *for*, this map which in a sense bears a 1:1 relation with a fractal dimension? What can one do with it, other than admire its psychedelic elegance?

If we were to imagine an *information map* — a cartographic projection of the Net in its entirety — we would have to include in it the features of chaos, which have already begun to appear, for example, in the operations of complex parallel processing, telecommunications, transfers of electronic “money,” viruses, guerilla hacking and so on.

Each of these “areas” of chaos could be represented by topographs similar to the Mandelbrot Set, such that the “peninsulas” are embedded or hidden within the map — such that they seem to “disappear.” This “writing” — parts of which vanish, parts of which efface themselves — represents the very process by which the Net is already compromised, incomplete to its own view, ultimately un-Controllable. In other words, the M Set, or something like it, might prove to be useful in “plotting” (in all senses of the word) the emergence of the counterNet as a chaotic process, a “creative evolution” in Prigogine’s term. If nothing else the M Set serves as a *metaphor* for a “mapping” of the TAZ’s interface with the Net as a *disappearance of information*. Every “catastrophe” in the Net is a node of power for the Web, the counter-Net. The Net will be damaged by chaos, while the Web may thrive on it.

Whether through simple data-piracy, or else by a more complex development of actual rapport with chaos, the Web-hacker, the cybernetician of the TAZ, will find ways to take advantage of perturbations, crashes, and breakdowns in the Net (ways to make information out of “entropy”). As a bricoleur, a scavenger of information shards, smuggler, blackmailer, perhaps even cyberterrorist, the TAZ-hacker will work for the evolution of clandestine fractal connections. These connections, and the *different* information that flows among and between them, will form “power outlets” for the coming-into-being of the TAZ itself — as if one were to steal electricity from the energy-monopoly to light an abandoned house for squatters.

Thus the Web, in order to produce situations conducive to the TAZ, will parasitize the Net — but we can also conceive of this strategy as an attempt to build toward the construction of an alternative and autonomous Net, “free” and no longer parasitic, which will serve as the basis for a “new society emerging from the shell of the old.” The counter-Net and the TAZ can be considered, practically speaking, as ends in themselves — but theoretically they can also be viewed as forms of struggle toward a different reality.

Having said this we must still admit to some qualms about computers, some still unanswered questions, especially about the Personal Computer.

The story of computer networks, BBSs and various other experiments in electro-democracy has so far been one of *hobbyism* for the most part. Many anarchists and libertarians have deep faith in the PC as a weapon of liberation and self-liberation — but no real gains to show, no palpable liberty.

I have little interest in some hypothetical emergent entrepreneurial class of self-employed data/word processors who will soon be able to carry on a vast cottage industry or piecemeal shitwork for various corporations and bureaucracies. Moreover it takes no ESP to foresee that this “class” will develop its *underclass* — a sort of lumpen yuppétariat: housewives, for example, who will provide their families with “second incomes” by turning their own homes into electro-sweatshops, little Work-tyrannies where the “boss” is a computer network.

Also I am not impressed by the sort of information and services proffered by contemporary “radical” networks. Somewhere — one is told — there exists an “information economy.” Maybe so; but the info being traded over the “alternative” BBSs seems to consist entirely of chitchat and techie-talk. Is this an economy? or merely a pastime for enthusiasts? OK, PCs have created yet another “print revolution” — OK, marginal webworks are evolving — OK, I can now carry on six phone conversations at once. But what difference has this made in my ordinary life?

Frankly, I already had plenty of data to enrich my perceptions, what with books, movies, TV, theater, telephones, the U.S. Postal Service, altered states of consciousness, and so on. Do I really need a PC in order to obtain yet more such data? You offer me *secret* information? Well...perhaps I’m tempted — but still I demand *marvelous* secrets, not just unlisted telephone numbers or the trivia of cops and politicians. Most of all I want computers to provide me with information linked to *real goods* — “the good things in life,” as the IWW Preamble puts it. And here, since I’m accusing the hackers and BBSers of irritating intellectual vagueness, I must myself descend from the baroque clouds of Theory & Critique and explain what I mean by “real goods.”

Let’s say that for both political and personal reasons I desire good food, better than I can obtain from Capitalism — unpolluted food still blessed with strong and natural flavors. To complicate the game imagine that the food I crave is illegal — raw milk perhaps, or the exquisite Cuban fruit *mamey*, which cannot be imported fresh into the U.S. because its seed is hallucinogenic (or so I’m told). I am not a farmer. Let’s pretend I’m an importer of rare perfumes and aphrodisiacs, and sharpen the play by assuming most of my stock is also illegal. Or maybe I only want to trade word processing services for organic turnips, but refuse to report the transaction to the IRS (as required by law, believe it or not). Or maybe I want to meet other humans for consensual but illegal acts of mutual pleasure (this has actually been tried, but all the hard-sex BBSs have been busted — and what use is an underground with *lousy security*?). In short, assume that I’m fed up with mere information, the ghost in the machine. According to you, computers should already be quite capable of facilitating my desires for food, drugs, sex, tax evasion. So what’s the matter? Why isn’t it happening?

The TAZ has occurred, is occurring, and will occur with or without the computer. But for the TAZ to reach its full potential it must become less a matter of spontaneous combustion and more a matter of “islands in the Net.” The Net, or rather the counter-Net, assumes the promise of an integral aspect of the TAZ, an addition that will multiply its potential, a “quantum jump” (odd how this expression has come to mean a *big* leap) in complexity and significance. The TAZ must now exist within a world of pure space, the world of the senses. Liminal, even evanescent, the TAZ must combine information and desire in order to fulfill its adventure (its “happening”), in order to fill itself to the borders of its destiny, to saturate itself with its own becoming.

Perhaps the Neo-Paleolithic School are correct when they assert that all forms of alienation and mediation must be destroyed or abandoned before our goals can be realized — or perhaps true anarchy will be realized only in Outer Space, as some futuro-libertarians assert. But the TAZ does not concern itself very much with “was” or “will be.” The TAZ is interested in results, successful raids on consensus reality, breakthroughs into more intense and more abundant life. If the computer cannot be used in this project, then the computer will have to be overcome. My intuition however suggests that the counter-Net is already coming into being, perhaps already exists — but I cannot prove it. I’ve based the theory of the TAZ in large part on this intuition. Of course the Web also involves non-computerized networks of exchange such as samizdat, the black market, etc. — but the full potential of non-hierarchic information networking logically leads to the computer as the tool par excellence. Now I’m waiting for the hackers to prove I’m right, that my intuition is valid. Where are my turnips?

## “Gone to Croatan”

We have no desire to define the TAZ or to elaborate dogmas about how it *must* be created. Our contention is rather that it has been created, will be created, and is being created. Therefore it would prove more valuable and interesting to look at some TAZs past and present, and to speculate about future manifestations; by evoking a few prototypes we may be able to gauge the potential scope of the complex, and perhaps even get a glimpse of an “archetype.” Rather than attempt any sort of encyclopaedism we’ll adopt a scatter-shot technique, a mosaic of glimpses, beginning quite arbitrarily with the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the settlement of the New World.

The opening of the “new” world was conceived from the start as an *occultist operation*. The magus John Dee, spiritual advisor to Elizabeth I, seems to have invented the concept of “magical imperialism” and infected an entire generation with it. Hakluyt and Raleigh fell under his spell, and Raleigh used his connections with the “School of Night” — a cabal of advanced thinkers, aristocrats, and adepts — to further the causes of exploration, colonization and mapmaking. *The Tempest* was a propaganda-piece for the new ideology, and the Roanoke Colony was its first showcase experiment.

The alchemical view of the New World associated it with *materia prima* or *hyle*, the “state of Nature,” innocence and all-possibility (“Virgin-ia”), a chaos or inchoateness which the adept would transmute into “gold,” that is, into spiritual perfection *as well as* material abundance. But this alchemical vision is also informed in part by an actual fascination with the inchoate, a sneaking sympathy for it, a feeling of yearning for its formless form which took the symbol of the “Indian” for its focus: “Man” in the state of nature, uncorrupted by “government.” Caliban, the Wild Man, is lodged like a virus in the very machine of Occult Imperialism; the forest/animal/humans are invested from the very start with the magic power of the marginal, despised and outcaste. On the one hand Caliban is ugly, and Nature a “howling wilderness” — on the other, Caliban is noble and unchained, and Nature an Eden. This split in European consciousness predates the Romantic/Classical dichotomy; it’s rooted in Renaissance High Magic. The discovery of America (Eldorado, the Fountain of Youth) crystallized it; and it precipitated in actual schemes for colonization.

We were taught in elementary school that the first settlements in Roanoke failed; the colonists disappeared, leaving behind them only the cryptic message “Gone To Croatan.” Later reports of “grey-eyed Indians” were dismissed as legend. What really happened, the textbook implied, was that the Indians massacred the defenseless settlers. However, “Croatan” was not some Eldorado; it was the name of a neighboring tribe of friendly Indians. Apparently the settlement was simply moved back from the coast into the Great Dismal Swamp and absorbed into the tribe. And the grey-eyed Indians were real — they’re *still there*, and they still call themselves Croatans.

So — the very first colony in the New World chose to renounce its contract with Prospero (Dee/Raleigh/Empire) and go over to the Wild Men with Caliban. They dropped out. They became “Indians,” “went native,” opted for chaos over the appalling miseries of serfing for the plutocrats and intellectuals of London.

As America came into being where once there had been “Turtle Island,” Croatan remained embedded in its collective psyche. Out beyond the frontier, the state of Nature (i.e. no State) still prevailed — and within the consciousness of the settlers the option of wildness always lurked, the temptation to give up on Church, farmwork, literacy, taxes — all the burdens of civilization — and “go to Croatan” in some way or another. Moreover, as the Revolution in England was betrayed, first by Cromwell and then by Restoration, waves of Protestant radicals fled or were transported to the New World (which had now become a *prison*, a place of *exile*). Antinomians, Familists, rogue Quakers, Levellers, Diggers, and Ranters were now introduced to the occult shadow of wildness, and rushed to embrace it.

Anne Hutchinson and her friends were only the best known (i.e. the most upper-class) of the Antinomians — having had the bad luck to be caught up in Bay Colony politics — but a much more radical wing of the movement clearly existed. The incidents Hawthorne relates in “The Maypole of Merry Mount” are thoroughly historical; apparently the extremists had decided to renounce Christianity altogether and revert to paganism. If they had succeeded in uniting with their Indian allies the result might have been an Antinomian/Celtic/Algonquin syncretic religion, a sort of 17<sup>th</sup> century North American *Santeria*.

Sectarians were able to thrive better under the looser and more corrupt administrations in the Caribbean, where rival European interests had left many islands deserted or even unclaimed. Barbados and Jamaica in particular must have been settled by many extremists, and I believe that Levellerish and Ranterish influences contributed to the Buccaneer “utopia” on Tortuga. Here for the first time, thanks to Esquemelin, we can study a successful New World proto-TAZ in some depth. Fleeing from hideous “benefits” of Imperialism such as slavery, serfdom, racism and intolerance, from the tortures of impressment and the living death of the plantations, the Buccaneers adopted Indian ways, intermarried with Caribs, accepted blacks and Spaniards as equals, rejected all nationality, elected their captains democratically, and reverted to the “state of Nature.” Having declared themselves “at war with all the world,” they sailed forth to plunder under mutual contracts called “Articles” which were so egalitarian that every member received a full share and the Captain usually only 1 1/4 or 1 1/2 shares. Flogging and punishments were forbidden — quarrels were settled by vote or by the code duello.

It is simply wrong to brand the pirates as mere sea-going highwaymen or even proto-capitalists, as some historians have done. In a sense they were “social bandits,” although their base communities were not traditional peasant societies but “utopias” created almost *ex nihilo* in terra incognita, enclaves of total liberty occupying empty spaces on the map. After the fall of Tortuga, the Buccaneer ideal remained alive all through the “Golden Age” of Piracy (ca. 1660–1720), and resulted in land-settlements in Belize, for example, which was founded by Buccaneers. Then, as the scene shifted to Madagascar — an island still unclaimed by any imperial power and ruled only by a patchwork of native kings (chiefs) eager for pirate allies — the Pirate Utopia reached its highest form.

Defoe’s account of Captain Mission and the founding of Libertatia may be, as some historians claim, a literary hoax meant to propagandize for radical Whig theory — but it was embedded in *The General History of the Pyrates* (1724–28), most of which is still accepted as true and accurate. Moreover the story of Capt. Mission was not criticized when the book appeared and many old Madagascar hands still survived. *They* seem to have believed it, no doubt because they had experienced pirate enclaves very much like Libertatia. Once again, rescued slaves, natives, and even traditional enemies such as the Portuguese were all invited to join as equals. (Liberating

slave ships was a major preoccupation.) Land was held in common, representatives elected for short terms, booty shared; doctrines of liberty were preached far more radical than even those of *Common Sense*.

Libertatia hoped to endure, and Mission died in its defense. But most of the pirate utopias were meant to be temporary; in fact the corsairs' true "republics" were their ships, which sailed under Articles. The shore enclaves usually had no law at all. The last classic example, Nassau in the Bahamas, a beachfront resort of shacks and tents devoted to wine, women (and probably boys too, to judge by Birge's *Sodomy and Piracy*), song (the pirates were inordinately fond of music and used to hire on bands for entire cruises), and wretched excess, vanished overnight when the British fleet appeared in the Bay. Blackbeard and "Calico Jack" Rackham and his crew of pirate women moved on to wilder shores and nastier fates, while others meekly accepted the Pardon and reformed. But the Buccaneer tradition lasted, both in Madagascar where the mixed-blood children of the pirates began to carve out kingdoms of their own, and in the Caribbean, where escaped slaves as well as mixed black/white/red groups were able to thrive in the mountains and backlands as "Maroons." The Maroon community in Jamaica still retained a degree of autonomy and many of the old folkways when Zora Neale Hurston visited there in the 1920's (see *Tell My Horse*). The Maroons of Suriname still practice African "paganism."

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, North America also produced a number of drop-out "tri-racial isolate communities." (This clinical-sounding term was invented by the Eugenics Movement, which produced the first scientific studies of these communities. Unfortunately the "science" merely served as an excuse for hatred of racial "mongrels" and the poor, and the "solution to the problem" was usually forced sterilization.) The nuclei invariably consisted of runaway slaves and serfs, "criminals" (i.e. the very poor), "prostitutes" (i.e. white women who married non-whites), and members of various native tribes. In some cases, such as the Seminole and Cherokee, the traditional tribal structure absorbed the newcomers; in other cases, new tribes were formed. Thus we have the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp, who persisted through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, adopting runaway slaves, functioning as a way station on the Underground Railway, and serving as a religious and ideological center for slave rebellions. The religion was Hoodoo, a mixture of African, native, and Christian elements, and according to the historian H. Leaming-Bey the elders of the faith and the leaders of the Great Dismal Maroons were known as "the Seven Finger High Glisters."

The Ramapauhs of northern New Jersey (incorrectly known as the "Jackson Whites") present another romantic and archetypal genealogy: freed slaves of the Dutch poltroons, various Delaware and Algonquin clans, the usual "prostitutes," the "Hessians" (a catch-phrase for lost British mercenaries, drop-out Loyalists, etc.), and local bands of social bandits such as Claudius Smith's.

An African-Islamic origin is claimed by some of the groups, such as the Moors of Delaware and the Ben Ishmaels, who migrated from Kentucky to Ohio in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The Ishmaels practiced polygamy, never drank alcohol, made their living as minstrels, intermarried with Indians and adopted their customs, and were so devoted to nomadism that they built their houses on wheels. Their annual migration triangulated on frontier towns with names like Mecca and Medina. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century some of them espoused anarchist ideals, and they were targeted by the Eugenacists for a particularly vicious pogrom of salvation-by-extermination. Some of the earliest Eugenics laws were passed in their honor. As a tribe they "disappeared" in the 1920's, but probably swelled the ranks of early "Black Islamic" sects such as the Moorish Science Temple. I myself



grew up on legends of the “Kallikaks” of the nearby New Jersey Pine Barrens (and of course on Lovecraft, a rabid racist who was fascinated by the isolate communities). The legends turned out to be folk-memories of the slanders of the Eugenicists, whose U.S. headquarters were in Vineland, NJ, and who undertook the usual “reforms” against “miscegenation” and “feeble-mindedness” in the Barrens (including the publication of photographs of the Kallikaks, crudely and obviously retouched to make them look like monsters of misbreeding).

The “isolate communities” — at least, those which have retained their identity into the 20<sup>th</sup> century — consistently refuse to be absorbed into either mainstream culture or the black “subculture” into which modern sociologists prefer to categorize them. In the 1970’s, inspired by the Native American renaissance, a number of groups — including the Moors and the Ramapoughs — applied to the B.I.A. for recognition as *Indian tribes*. They received support from native activists but were refused official status. If they’d won, after all, it might have set a dangerous precedent for drop-outs of all sorts, from “white Peyotists” and hippies to black nationalists, aryan, anarchists and libertarians — a “reservation” for anyone and everyone! The “European Project” cannot recognize the existence of the Wild Man — green chaos is still too much of a threat to the imperial dream of order.

Essentially the Moors and Ramapoughs rejected the “diachronic” or historical explanation of their origins in favor of a “synchronic” self-identity based on a “myth” of Indian adoption. Or to put it another way, *they named themselves “Indians.”* If everyone who wished “to be an Indian” could accomplish this by an act of self-naming, imagine what a departure to Croatan would take place. That old occult shadow still haunts the remnants of our forests (which, by the way, have greatly increased in the Northeast since the 18-19<sup>th</sup> century as vast tracts of farmland return to scrub. Thoreau on his deathbed dreamed of the return of “...Indians...forests...”: the return of the repressed).

The Moors and Ramapoughs of course have good materialist reasons to think of themselves as Indians — after all, they have Indian ancestors — but if we view their self-naming in “mythic” as well as historical terms we’ll learn more of relevance to our quest for the TAZ. Within tribal societies there exist what some anthropologists call *mannenbunden*: totemic societies devoted to an identity with “Nature” in the act of shapeshifting, of *becoming* the totem-animal (werewolves, jaguar shamans, leopard men, cat-witches, etc.). In the context of an entire colonial society (as Taussig points out in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*) the shapeshifting power is seen as inhering in the native culture as a whole — thus the most repressed sector of the society acquires a paradoxical power through the myth of its occult knowledge, which is feared and desired by the colonist. Of course the natives really do have certain occult knowledge; but in response to Imperial perception of native culture as a kind of “spiritual wild(er)ness,” the natives come to see themselves more and more consciously in that role. Even as they are marginalized, the *Margin* takes on an aura of magic. Before the whiteman, they were simply tribes of people — now, they are “guardians of Nature,” inhabitants of the “state of Nature.” Finally the colonist himself is seduced by this “myth.” Whenever an American wants to drop out or back into Nature, invariably he “becomes an Indian.” The Massachusetts radical democrats (spiritual descendents of the radical Protestants) who organized the Tea Party, and who literally believed that governments could be abolished (the whole Berkshire region declared itself in a “state of Nature”!), disguised themselves as “Mohawks.” Thus the colonists, who suddenly saw themselves marginalized vis-à-vis the motherland, adopted the role of the marginalized natives, thereby (in a sense) seeking to participate in their occult power, their mythic radiance. From the Mountain Men to the Boy

Scouts, the dream of “becoming an Indian” flows beneath myriad strands of American history, culture and consciousness.

The sexual imagery connected to “tri-racial” groups also bears out this hypothesis. “Natives” of course are always immoral, but racial renegades and drop-outs must be downright polymorphous-perverse. The Buccaneers were buggers, the Maroons and Mountain Men were miscegenists, the “Jukes and Kallikaks” indulged in fornication and incest (leading to mutations such as polydactyly), the children ran around naked and masturbated openly, etc., etc. Reverting to a “state of Nature” paradoxically seems to allow for the practice of every “unnatural” act; or so it would appear if we believe the Puritans and Eugenicists. And since many people in repressed moralistic racist societies secretly desire exactly these licentious acts, they project them outwards onto the marginalized, and thereby convince themselves that they themselves remain civilized and pure. And in fact some marginalized communities do really reject consensus morality — the pirates certainly did! — and no doubt actually act out some of civilization’s repressed desires. (*Wouldn’t you?*) Becoming “wild” is always an erotic act, an act of nakedness.

Before leaving the subject of the “tri-racial isolates,” I’d like to recall Nietzsche’s enthusiasm for “race mixing.” Impressed by the vigor and beauty of hybrid cultures, he offered miscegenation not only as a solution to the problem of race but also as the principle for a new humanity freed of ethnic and national chauvinism — a precursor to the “psychic nomad,” perhaps. Nietzsche’s dream still seems as remote now as it did to him. Chauvinism still rules OK. Mixed cultures remain submerged. But the autonomous zones of the Buccaneers and Maroons, Ishmaels and Moors, Ramapoughs and “Kallikaks” remain, or their stories remain, as indications of what Nietzsche might have called “the Will to Power as Disappearance.” We must return to this theme.

## Music as an Organizational Principle

Meanwhile, however, we turn to the history of classical anarchism in the light of the TAZ concept.

Before the “closure of the map,” a good deal of anti-authoritarian energy went into “escapist” communes such as Modern Times, the various Phalansteries, and so on. Interestingly, some of them were not intended to last “forever,” but only as long as the project proved fulfilling. By Socialist/Utopian standards these experiments were “failures,” and therefore we know little about them.

When escape beyond the frontier proved impossible, the era of revolutionary urban Communes began in Europe. The Communes of Paris, Lyons and Marseilles did not survive long enough to take on any characteristics of permanence, and one wonders if they were meant to. From our point of view the chief matter of fascination is the *spirit* of the Communes. During and after these years anarchists took up the practice of revolutionary nomadism, drifting from uprising to uprising, looking to keep alive in themselves the intensity of spirit they experienced in the moment of insurrection. In fact, certain anarchists of the Stirnerite/Nietzschean strain came to look on this activity as an end in itself, a way of *always occupying an autonomous zone*, the interzone which opens up in the midst or wake of war and revolution (cf. Pynchon’s “zone” in *Gravity’s Rainbow*). They declared that if any socialist revolution *succeeded*, they’d be the first to turn against it. Short of universal anarchy they had no intention of ever stopping. In Russia in 1917 they greeted the free Soviets with joy: *this* was their goal. But as soon as the Bolsheviks betrayed the Revolution, the individualist anarchists were the first to go back on the warpath. After Kronstadt, of course, *all* anarchists condemned the “Soviet Union” (a contradiction in terms) and moved on in search of new insurrections.

Makhno’s Ukraine and anarchist Spain were meant to have *duration*, and despite the exigencies of continual war both succeeded to a certain extent: not that they lasted a “long time,” but they were successfully organized and could have persisted if not for outside aggression. Therefore, from among the experiments of the inter-War period I’ll concentrate instead on the mad-cap Republic of Fiume, which is much less well known, and was *not* meant to endure. Gabriele D’Annunzio, Decadent poet, artist, musician, aesthete, womanizer, pioneer daredevil aeronautist, black magician, genius and cad, emerged from World War I as a hero with a small army at his beck and command: the “Arditi.” At a loss for adventure, he decided to capture the city of Fiume from Yugoslavia and *give* it to Italy. After a necromantic ceremony with his mistress in a cemetery in Venice he set out to conquer Fiume, and succeeded without any trouble to speak of. But Italy turned down his generous offer; the Prime Minister called him a fool.

In a huff, D’Annunzio decided to declare independence and see how long he could get away with it. He and one of his anarchist friends wrote the Constitution, which declared *music to be the central principle of the State*. The Navy (made up of deserters and Milanese anarchist maritime unionists) named themselves the *Uscochi*, after the long-vanished pirates who once lived on local offshore islands and preyed on Venetian and Ottoman shipping. The modern Uscochi

succeeded in some wild coups: several rich Italian merchant vessels suddenly gave the Republic a future: money in the coffers! Artists, bohemians, adventurers, anarchists (D'Annunzio corresponded with Malatesta), fugitives and Stateless refugees, homosexuals, military dandies (the uniform was black with pirate skull-&-crossbones — later stolen by the SS), and crank reformers of every stripe (including Buddhists, Theosophists and Vedantists) began to show up at Fiume in droves. The party never stopped. Every morning D'Annunzio read poetry and manifestos from his balcony; every evening a concert, then fireworks. This made up the entire activity of the government. Eighteen months later, when the wine and money had run out and the Italian fleet *finally* showed up and lobbed a few shells at the Municipal Palace, no one had the energy to resist.

D'Annunzio, like many Italian anarchists, later veered toward fascism — in fact, Mussolini (the ex-Syndicalist) himself seduced the poet along that route. By the time D'Annunzio realized his error it was too late: he was too old and sick. But Il Duce had him killed anyway — pushed off a balcony — and turned him into a “martyr.” As for Fiume, though it lacked the *seriousness* of the free Ukraine or Barcelona, it can probably teach us more about certain aspects of our quest. It was in some ways the last of the pirate utopias (or the only modern example) — in other ways, perhaps, it was very nearly the first modern TAZ.

I believe that if we compare Fiume with the Paris uprising of 1968 (also the Italian urban insurrections of the early seventies), as well as with the American countercultural communes and their anarcho-New Left influences, we should notice certain similarities, such as: — the importance of aesthetic theory (cf. the Situationists) — also, what might be called “pirate economics,” living high off the surplus of social overproduction — even the popularity of colorful military uniforms — and the concept of *music* as revolutionary social change — and finally their shared air of impermanence, of being ready to move on, shape-shift, re-locate to other universities, mountaintops, ghettos, factories, safe houses, abandoned farms — or even other planes of reality. No one was trying to impose yet another Revolutionary Dictatorship, either at Fiume, Paris, or Millbrook. Either the world would change, or it wouldn't. Meanwhile keep on the move and *live intensely*.

The Munich Soviet (or “Council Republic”) of 1919 exhibited certain features of the TAZ, even though — like most revolutions — its stated goals were not exactly “temporary.” Gustav Landauer's participation as Minister of Culture along with Silvio Gesell as Minister of Economics and other anti-authoritarian and extreme libertarian socialists such as the poet/playwrights Erich M<sup>a</sup>hsam and Ernst Toller, and Ret Marut (the novelist B. Traven), gave the Soviet a distinct anarchist flavor. Landauer, who had spent years of isolation working on his grand synthesis of Nietzsche, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Stirner, Meister Eckhardt, the radical mystics, and the Romantic *volk*-philosophers, knew from the start that the Soviet was doomed; he hoped only that it would last long enough to be *understood*. Kurt Eisner, the martyred founder of the Soviet, believed quite literally that poets and poetry should form the basis of the revolution. Plans were launched to devote a large piece of Bavaria to an experiment in anarcho-socialist economy and community. Landauer drew up proposals for a Free School system and a People's Theater. Support for the Soviet was more or less confined to the poorest working-class and bohemian neighborhoods of Munich, and to groups like the Wandervogel (the neo-Romantic youth movement), Jewish radicals (like Buber), the Expressionists, and other marginals. Thus historians dismiss it as the “Coffeehouse Republic” and belittle its significance in comparison with Marxist and Spartacist participation in Germany's post-War revolution(s). Outmaneuvered by the Communists and eventually murdered by soldiers under the influence of the occult/fascist Thule Society, Landauer deserves to be

remembered as a saint. Yet even anarchists nowadays tend to misunderstand and condemn him for “selling out” to a “socialist government.” If the Soviet had lasted even a year, we would weep at the mention of its beauty — but before even the first flowers of that Spring had wilted, the *geist* and the spirit of poetry were crushed, and we have forgotten. Imagine what it must have been to breathe the air of a city in which the Minister of Culture has just predicted that schoolchildren will soon be memorizing the works of Walt Whitman. Ah for a time machine...

# The Will to Power as Disappearance

Foucault, Baudrillard, *et al.* have discussed various modes of “disappearance” at great length. Here I wish to suggest that the TAZ is in some sense a *tactic of disappearance*. When the Theorists speak of the disappearance of the Social they mean in part the impossibility of the “Social Revolution,” and in part the impossibility of “the State” — the abyss of power, the end of the discourse of power. The anarchist question in this case should then be: Why *bother* to confront a “power” which has lost all meaning and become sheer Simulation? Such confrontations will only result in dangerous and ugly spasms of violence by the emptyheaded shit-for-brains who’ve inherited the keys to all the armories and prisons. (Perhaps this is a crude american misunderstanding of sublime and subtle Franco-Germanic Theory. If so, fine; whoever said *understanding* was needed to make use of an idea?)

As I read it, disappearance seems to be a very logical radical option for our time, not at all a disaster or death for the radical project. Unlike the morbid deathfreak nihilistic interpretation of Theory, mine intends to *mine* it for useful strategies in the always-ongoing “revolution of everyday life”: the struggle that cannot cease even with the last failure of political or social revolution because nothing except the end of the world can bring an end to everyday life, nor to our aspirations for the *good things*, for the Marvelous. And as Nietzsche said, if the world *could* come to an end, logically it would have done so; it has not, so it *does not*. And so, as one of the sufis said, no matter how many draughts of forbidden wine we drink, we will carry this raging thirst into eternity.

Zerzan and Black have independently noted certain “elements of Refusal” (Zerzan’s term) which perhaps can be seen as somehow symptomatic of a radical culture of disappearance, partly unconscious but partly conscious, which influences far more people than any leftist or anarchist idea. These gestures are made *against* institutions, and in that sense are “negative” — but each negative gesture also suggests a “positive” tactic to replace rather than merely refuse the despised institution.

For example, the negative gesture against *schooling* is “voluntary illiteracy.” Since I do not share the liberal worship of literacy for the sake of social ameliorization, I cannot quite share the gasps of dismay heard everywhere at this phenomenon: I sympathize with children who refuse books along with the garbage in the books. There are however positive alternatives which make use of the same energy of disappearance. Home-schooling and craft-apprenticeship, like truancy, result in an absence from the prison of school. Hacking is another form of “education” with certain features of “invisibility.”

A mass-scale negative gesture against politics consists simply of not voting. “Apathy” (i.e. a healthy boredom with the weary Spectacle) keeps over half the nation from the polls; anarchism never accomplished as much! (Nor did anarchism have anything to do with the failure of the recent Census.) Again, there are positive parallels: “networking” as an alternative to politics is practiced at many levels of society, and non-hierarchic organization has attained popularity even

outside the anarchist movement, simply because it *works*. (ACT UP and Earth First! are two examples. Alcoholics Anonymous, oddly enough, is another.)

Refusal of *Work* can take the forms of absenteeism, on-job drunkenness, sabotage, and sheer inattention — but it can also give rise to new modes of rebellion: more self-employment, participation in the “black” economy and “*lavoro nero*,” welfare scams and other criminal options, pot farming, etc. — all more or less “invisible” activities compared to traditional leftist confrontational tactics such as the general strike.

Refusal of the *Church*? Well, the “negative gesture” here probably consists of...watching television. But the positive alternatives include all sorts of non-authoritarian forms of spirituality, from “unchurched” Christianity to neo-paganism. The “Free Religions” as I like to call them — small, self-created, half-serious/half-fun cults influenced by such currents as Discordianism and anarcho-Taoism — are to be found all over marginal America, and provide a growing “fourth way” outside the mainstream churches, the televangelical bigots, and New Age vapidness and consumerism. It might also be said that the chief refusal of orthodoxy consists of the construction of “private moralities” in the Nietzschean sense: the spirituality of “free spirits.”

The negative refusal of *Home* is “homelessness,” which most consider a form of victimization, not wishing to be *forced* into nomadology. But “homelessness” can in a sense be a virtue, an adventure — so it appears, at least, to the huge international movement of the squatters, our modern hobos.

The negative refusal of the *Family* is clearly divorce, or some other symptom of “breakdown.” The positive alternative springs from the realization that life can be happier without the nuclear family, whereupon a hundred flowers bloom — from single parentage to group marriage to erotic affinity group. The “European Project” fights a major rearward action in defense of “Family” — oedipal misery lies at the heart of Control. Alternatives exist — but they must remain in hiding, especially since the War against Sex of the 1980’s and 1990’s.

What is the refusal of *Art*? The “negative gesture” is not to be found in the silly nihilism of an “Art Strike” or the defacing of some famous painting — it is to be seen in the almost universal glassy-eyed boredom that creeps over most people at the very mention of the word. But what would the “positive gesture” consist of? Is it possible to imagine an aesthetics that does not *engage*, that removes itself from History and even from the Market? or at least *tends* to do so? which wants to replace representation with *presence*? How does presence make itself felt even in (or through) representation?

“Chaos Linguistics” traces a presence which is continually disappearing from all orderings of language and meaning-systems; an elusive presence, evanescent, *latif* (“subtle,” a term in sufi alchemy) — the Strange Attractor around which memes accrue, chaotically forming new and spontaneous orders. Here we have an aesthetics of the borderland between chaos and order, the margin, the area of “catastrophe” where the breakdown of the system can equal enlightenment. (Note: for an explanation of “Chaos Linguistics” see Appendix A, then please read this paragraph again.)

The disappearance of the artist IS “the suppression and realization of art,” in Situationist terms. But from where do we vanish? And are we ever seen or heard of again? We go to Croatan — what’s our fate? All our art consists of a goodbye note to history — “Gone To Croatan” — but where is it, and what will we *do* there?

First: We’re not talking here about literally vanishing from the world and its future: — no escape backward in time to paleolithic “original leisure society” — no forever utopia, no backmountain

hideaway, no island; also, no post-Revolutionary utopia — most likely no Revolution at all! — also, no VONU, no anarchist Space Stations — nor do we accept a “Baudrillardian disappearance” into the silence of an ironic hyperconformity. I have no quarrel with any Rimbauds who escape Art for whatever Abyssinia they can find. But we can’t build an aesthetics, even an aesthetics of disappearance, on the simple act of *never coming back*. By saying we’re not an avant-garde and that there is no avant-garde, we’ve written our “Gone To Croatan” — the question then becomes, how to envision “everyday life” in Croatan? particularly if we cannot say that Croatan exists in Time (Stone Age or Post-Revolution) or Space, either as utopia or as some forgotten midwestern town or as Abyssinia? Where and when is the world of unmediated creativity? If it *can* exist, it *does* exist — but perhaps only as a sort of alternate reality which we so far have not learned to perceive. Where would we look for the seeds — the weeds cracking through our sidewalks — from this other world into our world? the clues, the right directions for searching? a finger pointing at the moon?

I believe, or would at least like to propose, that the only solution to the “suppression and realization” of Art lies in the emergence of the TAZ. I would strongly reject the criticism that the TAZ itself is “nothing but” a work of art, although it may have some of the trappings. I do suggest that the TAZ is the only possible “time” and “place” for art to happen for the sheer pleasure of creative play, and as an actual contribution to the forces which allow the TAZ to cohere and manifest.

Art in the World of Art has become a commodity; but deeper than that lies the problem of *re-presentation* itself, and the refusal of all *mediation*. In the TAZ art as a commodity will simply become impossible; it will instead be a condition of life. Mediation is harder to overcome, but the removal of all barriers between artists and “users” of art will tend toward a condition in which (as A.K. Coomaraswamy described it) “the artist is not a special sort of person, but every person is a special sort of artist.”

In sum: disappearance is not necessarily a “catastrophe” — except in the mathematical sense of “a sudden topological change.” All the *positive gestures* sketched here seem to involve various degrees of invisibility rather than traditional revolutionary confrontation. The “New Left” never really believed in its own existence till it saw itself on the Evening News. The New Autonomy, by contrast, will either infiltrate the media and subvert “it” from within — or else never be “seen” at all. The TAZ exists not only beyond Control but also beyond definition, beyond gazing and naming as acts of enslaving, beyond the understanding of the State, beyond the State’s ability to *see*.



# Ratholes in the Babylon of Information

The TAZ as a conscious radical tactic will emerge under certain conditions:

1. Psychological liberation. That is, we must realize (make real) the moments and spaces in which freedom is not only possible but *actual*. We must know in what ways we are genuinely oppressed, and also in what ways we are self-repressed or ensnared in a fantasy in which *ideas* oppress us. WORK, for example, is a far more actual source of misery for most of us than legislative politics. Alienation is far more dangerous for us than toothless outdated dying ideologies. Mental addiction to “ideals” — which in fact turn out to be mere projections of our resentment and sensations of victimization — will never further our project. The TAZ is not a harbinger of some pie-in-the-sky Social Utopia to which we must sacrifice our lives that our children’s children may breathe a bit of free air. The TAZ must be the scene of our present autonomy, but it can only exist on the condition that we already know ourselves as free beings.
2. The *counter-Net* must expand. At present it reflects more abstraction than actuality. Zines and BBSs exchange information, which is part of the necessary groundwork of the TAZ, but very little of this information relates to concrete goods and services necessary for the autonomous life. We do not live in CyberSpace; to dream that we do is to fall into CyberGnosis, the false transcendence of the body. The TAZ is a physical place and we are either in it or not. All the senses must be involved. The Web is like a new sense in some ways, but it must be *added* to the others — the others must not be subtracted from it, as in some horrible parody of the mystic trance. Without the Web, the full realization of the TAZ-complex would be impossible. But the Web is not the end in itself. It’s a weapon.
3. The apparatus of Control — the “State” — must (or so we must assume) continue to deliquesce and petrify simultaneously, must progress on its present course in which hysterical rigidity comes more and more to mask a vacuity, an abyss of power. As power “disappears,” our will to power must be disappearance.

We’ve already dealt with the question of whether the TAZ can be viewed “merely” as a work of art. But you will also demand to know whether it is more than a poor rat-hole in the Babylon of Information, or rather a maze of tunnels, more and more connected, but devoted only to the economic dead-end of piratical parasitism? I’ll answer that I’d rather be a rat in the wall than a rat in the cage — but I’ll also insist that the TAZ transcends these categories.

A world in which the TAZ succeeded in *putting down roots* might resemble the world envisioned by “P.M.” in his fantasy novel *bolo’bolo*. Perhaps the TAZ is a “proto-bolo.” But inasmuch as the TAZ exists *now*, it stands for much more than the mundanity of negativity or countercultural drop-out-ism. We’ve mentioned the *festal* aspect of the moment which is unControlled, and

which adheres in spontaneous self-ordering, however brief. It is “epiphanic” — a peak experience on the social as well as individual scale.

Liberation is realized struggle — this is the essence of Nietzsche’s “self-overcoming.” The present thesis might also take for a sign Nietzsche’s *wandering*. It is the precursor of the *drift*, in the Situ sense of the *derive* and Lyotard’s definition of *driftwork*. We can foresee a whole new geography, a kind of pilgrimage-map in which holy sites are replaced by peak experiences and TAZs: a *real* science of psychotopography, perhaps to be called “geo-autonomy” or “anarchomancy.”

The TAZ involves a kind of *ferality*, a growth from tameness to wild(er)ness, a “return” which is also a step forward. It also demands a “yoga” of chaos, a project of “higher” orderings (of consciousness or simply of life) which are approached by “surfing the wave-front of chaos,” of complex dynamism. The TAZ is an art of life in continual rising up, wild but gentle — a seducer not a rapist, a smuggler rather than a bloody pirate, a dancer not an eschatologist.

Let us admit that we have attended parties where for one brief night a republic of gratified desires was attained. Shall we not confess that the politics of that night have more reality and force for us than those of, say, the entire U.S. Government? Some of the “parties” we’ve mentioned lasted for two or three *years*. Is this something worth imagining, worth fighting for? Let us study invisibility, webworking, psychic nomadism — and who knows what we might attain?

— Spring Equinox, 1990

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Chaos Linguistics

Not yet a science but a proposition: That certain problems in linguistics might be solved by viewing language as a complex dynamical system or “Chaos field.”

Of all the responses to Saussure’s linguistics, two have special interest here: the first, “antilinguistics,” can be traced — in the modern period — from Rimbaud’s departure for Abyssinia; to Nietzsche’s “I fear that while we still have grammar we have not yet killed God”; to dada; to Korzybski’s “the Map is not the Territory”; to Burroughs’ cut-ups and “breakthrough in the Gray Room”; to Zerzan’s attack on language itself as representation and mediation.

The second, Chomskyan Linguistics, with its belief in “universal grammar” and its tree diagrams, represents (I believe) an attempt to “save” language by discovering “hidden invariables,” much in the same way certain scientists are trying to “save” physics from the “irrationality” of quantum mechanics. Although as an anarchist Chomsky might have been expected to side with the nihilists, in fact his beautiful theory has more in common with platonism or sufism than with anarchism. Traditional metaphysics describes language as pure light shining through the colored glass of the archetypes; Chomsky speaks of “innate” grammars. Words are leaves, branches are sentences, mother tongues are limbs, language families are trunks, and the roots are in “heaven”...or the DNA. I call this “hermetalinguistics” — hermetic and metaphysical. Nihilism (or “HeavyMetalinguistics” in honor of Burroughs) seems to me to have brought language to a dead end and threatened to render it “impossible” (a great feat, but a depressing one) — while Chomsky holds out the promise and hope of a last-minute revelation, which I find equally difficult to accept. I too would like to “save” language, but without recourse to any “Spooks,” or supposed rules about God, dice, and the Universe.

Returning to Saussure, and his posthumously published notes on anagrams in Latin poetry, we find certain hints of a process which somehow escapes the sign/signifier dynamic. Saussure was confronted with the suggestion of some sort of “meta”-linguistics which happens *within* language rather than being imposed as a categorical imperative from “outside.” As soon as language begins to play, as in the acrostic poems he examined, it seems to resonate with self-amplifying complexity. Saussure tried to quantify the anagrams but his figures kept running away from him (as if perhaps nonlinear equations were involved). Also, he began to find the anagrams *everywhere*, even in Latin prose. He began to wonder if he were hallucinating — or if anagrams were a natural unconscious process of *parole*. He abandoned the project.

I wonder: if enough of this sort of data were crunched through a computer, would we begin to be able to model language in terms of complex dynamical systems? Grammars then would not be “innate,” but would emerge from chaos as spontaneously evolving “higher orders,” in Prigogine’s sense of “creative evolution.” Grammars could be thought of as “Strange Attractors,” like the hidden pattern which “caused” the anagrams — patterns which are “real” but have “existence” only in terms of the sub-patterns they manifest. If *meaning* is elusive, perhaps it is because consciousness itself, and therefore language, is *fractal*.

I find this theory more satisfyingly anarchistic than either anti-linguistics or Chomskyanism. It suggests that language can overcome representation and mediation, not because it is innate, but *because it is chaos*. It would suggest that all dadaistic experimentation (Feyerabend described his school of scientific epistemology as “anarchist dada”) in sound poetry, gesture, cut-up, beast languages, etc. — all this was aimed neither at discovering nor destroying meaning, but at *creating* it. Nihilism points out gloomily that language “arbitrarily” creates meaning. Chaos Linguistics happily agrees, but adds that language can overcome language, that language can create freedom out of semantic tyranny’s confusion and decay.

## Appendix B: Applied Hedonics

The Bonnot Gang were vegetarians and drank only water. They came to a bad (tho' picturesque) end. Vegetables and water, in themselves excellent things — pure zen really — shouldn't be consumed as martyrdom but as an epiphany. Self-denial as radical praxis, the Leveller impulse, tastes of millenarian gloom — and this current on the Left shares an historical wellspring with the neo-puritan fundamentalism and moralic reaction of our decade. The New Ascesis, whether practiced by anorexic health-cranks, thin-lipped police sociologists, downtown straight-edge nihilists, cornpone fascist baptists, socialist torpedoes, drug-free Republicans...in every case the motive force is the same: *resentment*.

In the face of contemporary pecksniffian anaesthesia we'll erect a whole gallery of forebears, heroes who carried on the struggle against bad consciousness but still knew how to party, a genial gene pool, a rare and difficult category to define, great minds not just for Truth but for the *truth of pleasure*, serious but not sober, whose sunny disposition makes them not sluggish but sharp, brilliant but not tormented. Imagine a Nietzsche with good digestion. Not the tepid Epicureans nor the bloated Sybarites. Sort of a spiritual hedonism, an actual Path of Pleasure, vision of a good life which is both noble and *possible*, rooted in a sense of the magnificent over-abundance of reality.

Shaykh Abu Sa'id of Khorassan

Charles Fourier

Brillat-Savarin

Rabelais

Abu Nuwas

Aga Khan III

R. Vaneigem

Oscar Wilde

Omar Khayyam

Sir Richard Burton

Emma Goldman

add your own favorites

## Appendix C: Extra Quotes

As for us, He has appointed the job of permanent unemployment.  
If he wanted us to work, after all,  
He would not have created this wine. *wine*  
With a skinfull of this, Sir, *this*  
would you rush out to commit economics?  
— Jalaloddin Rumi, *Diwan-e Shams*

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,  
A flask of Wine, A Book of Verse — and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —  
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.  
Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears  
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears —  
*Tomorrow?* — Why, Tomorrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.  
Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!  
— Omar FitzGerald

History, materialism, monism, positivism, and all the “isms” of this world are old and rusty tools which I don't need or mind anymore. My principle is life, my end is death. I wish to live my life intensely for to embrace my life tragically.

You are waiting for the revolution? My own began a long time ago! When you will be ready (God, what an endless wait!) I won't mind going along with you for awhile. But when you'll stop, I shall continue on my insane and triumphal way toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing! Any society that you build will have its limits. And outside the limits of any society the unruly and heroic tramps will wander, with their wild & virgin thoughts — they who cannot live without planning ever new and dreadful outbursts of rebellion!

I shall be among them!

And after me, as before me, there will be those saying to their fellows: "So turn to yourselves rather than to your Gods or to your idols. Find what hides in yourselves; bring it to light; show yourselves!"

Because every person; who, searching his own inwardness, extracts what was mysteriously hidden therein; is a shadow eclipsing any form of society which can exist under the sun! All societies tremble when the scornful aristocracy of the tramps, the inaccessible, the unique, the rulers over the ideal, and the conquerors of the nothing resolutely advances.

So, come on iconoclasts, forward!

"Already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent!"

— Renzo Novatore Arcola, January, 1920

## Pirate Rant

Captain Bellamy

Daniel Defoe, writing under the pen name Captain Charles Johnson, wrote what became the first standard historical text on pirates, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*. According to Patrick Pringle's *Jolly Roger*, pirate recruitment was most effective among the unemployed, escaped bondsmen, and transported criminals. The high seas made for an instantaneous levelling of class inequalities. Defoe relates that a pirate named Captain Bellamy made this speech to the captain of a merchant vessel he had taken as a prize. The captain of the merchant vessel had just declined an invitation to join the pirates.

I am sorry they won't let you have your sloop again, for I scorn to do any one a mischief, when it is not to my advantage; damn the sloop, we must sink her, and she might be of use to you. Though you are a sneaking puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security; for the cowardly whelps have not the courage otherwise to defend what they get by knavery; but damn ye altogether: damn them for a pack of crafty rascals, and you, who serve them, for a parcel of hen-hearted numbskulls. They vilify us, the scoundrels do, when there is only this difference, they rob the poor under the cover of law, forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our own courage. Had you not better make then one of us, than sneak after these villains for employment?

When the captain replied that his conscience would not let him break the laws of God and man, the pirate Bellamy continued:

You are a devilish conscience rascal, I am a free prince, and I have as much authority to make war on the whole world, as he who has a hundred sail of ships at sea, and an army of 100,000 men in the field; and this my conscience tells me: but there is no arguing with such snivelling puppies, who allow superiors to kick them about deck at pleasure.

## The Dinner Party

The highest type of human society in the existing social order is found in the parlor. In the elegant and refined reunions of the aristocratic classes there is none of the impertinent interference of legislation. The Individuality of each is fully admitted. Intercourse, therefore, is perfectly



free. Conversation is continuous, brilliant, and varied. Groups are formed according to attraction. They are continuously broken up, and re-formed through the operation of the same subtile and all-pervading influence. Mutual deference pervades all classes, and the most perfect harmony, ever yet attained, in complex human relations, prevails under precisely those circumstances which Legislators and Statesmen dread as the conditions of inevitable anarchy and confusion. If there are laws of etiquette at all, they are mere suggestions of principles admitted into and judged of for himself or herself, by each individual mind.

Is it conceivable that in all the future progress of humanity, with all the innumerable elements of development which the present age is unfolding, society generally, and in all its relations, will not attain as high a grade of perfection as certain portions of society, in certain special relations, have already attained?

Suppose the intercourse of the parlor to be regulated by specific legislation. Let the time which each gentleman shall be allowed to speak to each lady be fixed by law; the position in which they should sit or stand be precisely regulated; the subjects which they shall be allowed to speak of, and the tone of voice and accompanying gestures with which each may be treated, carefully defined, all under pretext of preventing disorder and encroachment upon each other's privileges and rights, then can any thing be conceived better calculated or more certain to convert social intercourse into intolerable slavery and hopeless confusion?

— S. Pearl Andrews *The Science of Society*

Anarchist library  
Anti-Copyright



Hakim Bey  
T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism  
1985

Retrieved on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from [www.hermetic.com](http://www.hermetic.com)

[en.anarchistlibraries.net](http://en.anarchistlibraries.net)

# Grange Appeal

Peter Lamborn Wilson

2006

# Contents

I.	4
II.	5
III.	7
IV.	14
V.	18
VI.	20
VII.	23

The work we are going about is this, to dig up Georges Hill and the waste grounds thereabouts, and to sow corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows.

And the First Reason is this, that we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both rich and poor. That everyone that is born of the land may be fed by the Earth and his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that Rules in the Creation.

— Gerrard Winstanley, the Digger

“The True Levellers Standard Advanced,” April 26, 1649

Brothers of the plow, The power is with you;  
The world in expectation waits For action prompt and true,  
Oppression stalks abroad, Monopolies abound;  
Their giant hands already clutch The tillers of the ground.  
(Chorus)  
Awake, then, awake! the great world must be fed,  
And heaven gives the power to the hand that holds the bread.

— Geo. F. Root,

“The Hand That Holds The Bread”

*Grange Melodies* (Philadelphia, 1905)

# I.

One summer day in Colorado some years ago, the poet Reed Bye drove me around to look at a few of the still-standing Grange Halls of Boulder County. Plain wood-frame structures, simple in an almost Amish or Shaker manner (American Zen) and almost barn-like, these rural outposts of farm culture have been overtaken by the county's insane rate of "development." The farms that once surrounded the Grange Halls have been sold and subdivided — the Denver gentry have built huge "trophy homes," strip malls, defense and biotechnological labs, New Age supermarkets, etc., etc. The few horses and bewildered cows that still stand around in the shrinking "open spaces" appear to be waiting for the End. A thick but slightly luminous atmosphere of nostalgia hangs over the lonely halls baking in the sunlight.

Ever since childhood Sunday afternoon excursions in the fifties, I've been noticing Grange Halls in little American towns and admiring them. The bigger halls sometimes resemble charming Victorian churches — "carpenter gothic" — or firehouses. Not many of them appear to be still active or owned by the Grange. In Rosendale, a town near where I live in Upstate New York, the slightly ornate but decaying Grange Hall was saved by artists but tragically burned down several years ago.

So far I've been unable to discover any nice coffee table books devoted to this rich cross-section of American working-class vernacular public architecture. Not even the Grange itself seems to have published a study of its own disappearing heritage. At first I wasn't even certain that the Grange still existed. But eight years ago when I moved to the Hudson Valley, I began to see signs that the organization was not entirely moribund. At the Ulster County Fair, I met some exceedingly pleasant old ladies selling spiral-bound cookery books compiled by local Grangers.

At one point I thought about doing a book on Grange Hall architecture, but soon realized how huge a job it would be. Between 1868 and 1933, New York State alone spawned 1,531 Granges.<sup>1</sup> I'm no photographer, and I don't even own a car. I'd need a grant just to record the Granges in my own immediate area, let alone the state or the whole country.

Old photo archives do exist, as I learned when I tracked down some Grange historians and corresponded with them. But in the meantime I'd discovered other and even more fascinating aspects of Grange history. In its heyday, the Grange was one of the most progressive forces in the Populist movement, not just a club for lonely farmers in those long-dead days before cars and TVs atomized American social life. Once upon a time, the Grangers were firebreathing agrarian radicals. Moreover, it turned out that the Grange was a secret society with secret rituals.

Why hadn't I ever heard about this before?

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<sup>1</sup> See Leonard L. Allen, *History of New York State Grange* (Watertown, NY: Hungerford-Holbrook Co., 1934).

## II.

Of course, the Grange wasn't the first manifestation of American agrarian radicalism. In colonial times, for example, rural New York experienced a number of "Anti-Rent" uprisings against the feudal-manorial "Patroon System" introduced by the Dutch but preserved and even extended under the British. Even after the Revolution, farmers were still subjected to feudal leases and rents and treated as a rural proletariat by manor-lords like the Rensselaers and the Livingstons. In 1845, the long-simmering situation exploded in an Anti-Rent War. Farmers disguised as "Calico Indians" tarred and feathered some sheriffs.<sup>1</sup> A few people got shot. English and Irish Chartists, German Communists, and Manhattan radicals supported the rebels. But the movement was co-opted by the usual clever politicians who rode to power on radical slogans, then delivered only tepid reform. Private property was saved from the extremists who had really dreamed of abolishing rent. Like Punk squatters in Amsterdam or Manhattan who win legal control of their squats, the Anti-Rent farmers were transformed suddenly into landlords.

Looked at from a "Jeffersonian" point of view, America seems founded on agrarian principles as a revolutionary democratic nation of free yeoman-farmers. However, the 1789 Constitution acted as a counter-revolution and put an end to any immediate hope of extending the Jeffersonian franchise to slaves, Indians or women. (The Bill of Rights represents the last-minute "tepid reforms" of Jefferson himself, who — like many of the Founding Fathers — was a slave owner and land speculator.)

Back-country farmer uprisings like Shay's Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion were crushed by Washington, the new "King George." The American ruling class would consist of slave owners, merchants, financiers, lawyers, manufacturers and politicians — all male, all white. When freedom is defined in terms of property, those with more property have more freedom. Most Americans were still small farmers, and this remained the case throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But already by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Jeffersonian yeoman had lost control of the American future.

This loss, however, went largely unnoticed. Because of the existence of the *frontier*, (itself a creation of land speculators and Indian killers), the farmer could always leave rents and oppression behind and find 40 acres and a mule somewhere over the horizon. By the time of the Civil War, however, the frontier was already beginning to vanish. Slavery was abolished largely because it no longer suited an emergent capitalist economy based on money rather than land as the true measure of wealth. Labor had to be "free" — that is, regulated by wages and rents. In the Gilded Age of the Robber Barons following the Civil War, two classes emerged as the prime victims of this supposed freedom: the urban proletariat and the small farmers.

Railroads "opened up" America's rural hinterlands, true, but railroads also acted as the tentacles of predatory capitalism. Financiers and monopolists controlled the farm economy at nearly

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<sup>1</sup> See Henry Christman, *Tin Horns and Calico* (New York: Henry Holt, 1945); see also Dorothy Kubik, *A Free Soil — A Free People: The Anti-Rent War in Delaware County, New York* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1997).

every point of supply, demand and transportation. Farmers didn't work for wages, and they might even own property; nevertheless, they were exploited just like factory workers in the city. "Money interests" ruled reality itself, or so it seemed.

The Civil War had put an end to many of the old antebellum reform movements, but the post-War era created a whole spectrum of new ones. "Populism" was in the air — a hard-to-define radicalism, both urban and rural, that began to give birth to new organizations and take up new causes. In 1866, a Bureau of Agriculture clerk (and Freemason) in Washington, D.C., named Oliver Hudson Kelley, toured the devastated South and reported back not only to his office but also to a small circle of friends, all minor government clerks with farming backgrounds. They agonized over the plight of the American farmer and decided to take action. They founded a fraternal order, the Patrons of Husbandry (i.e., agriculture), that became known as the Grange (an archaic word for barn).

The "Seven Founders" of the Grange were all white men, but Kelley's niece, Miss Carrie Hall, convinced him to include women in the new organization, even as officers. For this she is recognized as "equal to the Founders" of the order. Aside from "Father" Kelley himself, a tireless, idealistic and charismatic figure, two founders exercised great influence on the order's forms and functions: William Saunders, a prominent landscape gardener originally from Scotland, and Francis Morton McDowell, the only non-bureaucrat, a fruit farmer from Steuben County, New York. Three Celts and their inspiring ideas for the order breathe a glorious and eccentric air of imagination and poetry. They proposed nothing less than a Masonic-style mystic and secret society, complete with ritual, regalia, and seven degrees of initiation, all based on the symbolism of farming.

In 1868, the first Grange of the infant order, Number One of Fredonia, New York, was founded in Chautauqua County, where another great Populist organization, the educational Chautauqua movement, also originated. (I wonder if the Marx Brothers knew of this when they or George S. Kaufman chose the name "Fredonia" for the fictional setting of their great anti-war comedy "Duck Soup.")

After a slow start, the new organization began to experience almost unbelievable success. Within eight years, some 24,000 charters had been granted, and membership was pushing a million. The Grange had hit on a magical formula: economic self-organization, cooperation, and mutual aid; no involvement in legislative electoral politics but militancy on social and economic issues; plenty of picnics, outings, celebrations, socializing and shared fun; and a really impressive but simple ritual based on the Eleusinian Mysteries.



### III.

Patrons, on your weary way,  
Is there darkness and delay?  
Have you trouble, constant strife  
To attain the higher life?  
Seek Pomona's signet ring,  
Talismanic words 'twill bring,  
Words that conquer far and near;  
Always hope *and perservere*.  
— Jas. L. Orr, "Hope and Perservere"  
(initiation hymn for 5<sup>th</sup> Degree)  
*Grange Melodies*

Between, say, 1840 and 1914, at a rough but reasonable guess, one out of every three Americans belonged to a fraternal organization — Masons, Oddfellows, Elks, Woodsmen, Rosicrucians, Good Templars, Druids, Daughters of Isis, etc. — or at least to some cultural society such as the Athenaeum or Chautauqua. With hindsight we can speak of a society falling away from organized religions but needing a secular substitute for the sociality or conviviality of the churches. After all, we reason, without telephones, TVs and automobiles, humans needed to come together physically to reproduce social life. (We moderns appear to have evolved beyond this crude physicality and require only the *image* of the social.) As technology came to mediate and even determine all aspects of the social, those fraternal and cultural organizations collapsed or disappeared.

This abstract view sees only a negativity (social isolation) and its negation in association. It tells us very little about the consciousness and motivation of the fraters and sorors of these organizations, nor of the positive and creative aspects of their thought and activity. Nineteenth century America possessed a great seriousness about raising its consciousness and reforming its institutions. It still dreamed of itself as a new world wherein the poisoned human relations of the past could be cured and transformed. The more radical of the fraternal organizations should really be considered as elements of the historical movement of the social.

The Grange cannot be seen merely as a refuge from isolation; nor can it be understood solely in economic terms, as some historians seem to imply. Certainly these motives existed, but they were enriched and informed by philosophical ideals which themselves were enacted or "performed" as social act in festivals and rituals. The masonic-inspired rituals of organizations like the Grange or the Knights of Labor can't be dismissed as epiphenomenal frippery or mere fraternal icing on

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<sup>1</sup> Solon Justus Buck, *The Grange Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and its Political, Economic and Social Manifestations, 1870–1880* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 1963, c. 1913).

<sup>2</sup> Oliver H. Kelley, *Origin and Progress of The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States: A History from 1866 to 1873* (Philadelphia: J. A. Wagenseller, 1875).

the cake of ideology. These rites were experienced as an integral aspect of practice that included conviviality and cooperation — indeed, as the essence or very meaning of such practice.

Historians writing from a perspective outside the Grange, such as the excellent Solon Justus Buck,<sup>1</sup> have little to say about its ritual. Insider Grange historians, such as Father Kelley<sup>2</sup> have little to say about the ritual's meaning, which for them is a given — and moreover to some extent a *secret*, and thus not discussable. So, in order to lift even a tiny corner of the veil, I've tracked down a very rare and obscure privately published (but not secret) book by C. Jerome Davis.<sup>3</sup> Davis's sources seem to imply that the real meaning and purpose of Grange ritual was the creation for modern agriculture of a craft Mystery in the classical sense of that term: an "open cult," so to speak, or symbolic discourse orchestrated toward transformation of life through transformation of consciousness.

It's not my intention to attempt a full description and history of the Grange degrees and their symbolism. In any case, much of this material remains secret, and I have no access to it. In order to set the scene for the Eleusinian connection, however, I'll begin with Solon Buck's brief summation of the "mystic" aspects of the Grange — in which, by the way, he takes very little interest.<sup>4</sup>

When the Grange was founded on December 4, 1867, Bro. McDowell was not present. He arrived in Washington on the eighth of January, 1868, and immediately suggested changes that resulted in a complete reorganization of the upper framework of the order.

The arrangement then adopted, which has remained substantially in force ever since, embraced seven degrees, four to be conferred by the subordinate grange, one by the state grange, and the two highest by the National Grange. The four subordinate degrees for men were entitled Laborer, Cultivator, Harvester, and Husbandman; and the corresponding degrees for women were Maid, Shepherdess, Gleaner, and Matron. The state grange was to confer the fifth degree, Pomona (Hope), on masters and past-masters of subordinate granges, and their wives if Matrons. The National Grange would confer the sixth degree, Flora (Charity), on masters and past-masters of state granges and their wives who had taken the fifth degree. Members of the sixth degree would constitute the National Council and after serving one year therein might take the seventh degree and become members of the Senate, which body had control of the secret work of the order. This degree, Demeter or Ceres (Faith), embraced a number of new features introduced by McDowell and was put forward as "a continuation of an ancient Association once so flourishing in the East." McDowell accepted the position of supreme head of this degree with the title of High Priest. Although there was considerable agitation for the abolition of the higher degrees among the rank and file of the Grangers when the organization was at the height of its prosperity in the seventies, all that was accomplished was a series of changes which rendered

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<sup>3</sup> C. Jerome Davis, *High Priest of Demeter: Notes & Quotes on the Origin of the Ritual and Early Years of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry* (No place of publication, 1974). Many thanks to New York State Grange Historian Stephen C. Coye for a photocopy of this gem.

<sup>4</sup> Most historians seem rather embarrassed by "secret societies" and unwilling to discuss them seriously lest they themselves be seen as conspiracy-cranks rather than real scholars. I've scanned many histories of, say, the intellectual origins of the American Revolution or Constitution that made no mention of Freemasonry! One needn't be a mystic to discuss the history of mysteries, but this subtle point seems to elude academics.

these degrees accessible to all Patrons in regular order; while the control of the order was kept in the hands of representative delegate bodies.<sup>5</sup>

The “ancient Eastern flourishing Association” was, of course, the Eleusinian Mysteries. McDowell electrified the D.C. conclave with the revelation that he himself had been initiated in Paris in 1861 into the Mysteries by the last High Priest of Demeter, the Duc D’Ascoli of Naples. Contrary to received opinion, the Mysteries had not been stamped out by the Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. but had survived secretly in Magna Graecia (southern Italy, originally colonized by Greeks) throughout the centuries. McDowell was to be the next High Priest of Demeter.

It’s impossible to sort out a precise chronology from *Notes & Quotes*, but it’s clear that McDowell had first visited Europe in 1858 looking for esoteric experiences relevant to his passion and profession of pomology. At some point he meets the mysterious Duke (and Duchess) and is persuaded to undergo initiation. He receives certain symbolic regalia, described in the following letter:<sup>6</sup>

To the Officers of National Grange

Dear Brothers:

I reached here yesterday noon & became the guest of Brother McDowell our Worthy Priest of Demeter. I need not assure you I found a cordial welcome — that you already anticipated. As instructed by you I made him familiar with the entire work we have accomplished since he conferred upon us the seventh degree — and our labors have met his most hearty approbation while he expresses himself even more sanguine than ourselves of the success of the order. It is his intention, now that the work is completed, to take immediate steps to organize Subordinate Granges in several towns in this vicinity, having the proper material already selected for that purpose.

I have already had the pleasure and satisfaction of examining the papers and paraphanilia which he received from the Duke of Ascoli at the time he had the Degree of Demeter conferred upon him & am perfectly satisfied with the authenticity of the same. The portraits of the Duke & Duchess are both before me also the Priests cap with which the Duke decorated Brother McDowell at the time he was made a Priest. This cap is well worthy a description & is the work of a Nun. It is composed of various colored silk & pure gold thread, the later, predominating. The designs upon it are leaves of various hieroglyphics & to every design even the minutest there is an appropriate explanation. It is lined inside with a pea green silk very finely quilted & its weight is about two pounds. You can form some idea of the workmanship when I assure you it required two years steady labor of a nun to make it. There is no tinsel or bead work about it — it is all genuine needlework. While the purity of the gold shows for itself being now over three hundred years old & as bright and brilliant as when made.

I have had this cap on my head & while describing it have it on the table before me. Could it but speak & tell of the honored heads that it has decorated & which

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<sup>5</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> This letter, dated April 8, 1868, from Wayne, NY, McDowell’s home town, was written by Father Kelley. The

now have crumbled to dust, could it exemplify to us the mysteries where it has been present what interesting mementos we should possess.

Kelley then describes McDowell's "Surplice" (black silk with gold trim) and hierophantic vest of white satin embroidered "with designs appropriate to agriculture" (dove, pruning hook, sickle).

When we were first told about the Duke's regalia I must confess that I had some misgivings, but seeing is believing in this case. Besides the Duke has his biography in print, & on page 195 New American Encyclopedia you will find a notice of the town of Ascoli an ancient city in Italy, from whence the Duke was made Grand Chamberlain to the King of Naples. However credulous others may be in regarding this degree of Demeter, just rest easy and do not trouble yourselves about showing proof — the whole history is at hand & it is ours & we *have the bonafide thing*. Your Scottish & Memphis rites & Solomon's Temple are completely eclipsed. We can just bust the wind out of anything in the way of antiquity. It will be the height of my ambition to receive at some future day the position & the regalia & occupy the chair of the Priest of Demeter, the very highest position in our order but as it is a life office & must descend in regular rotation I shall probably be binding grain in the harvest field above long before it will come my turn.

However it is in good hands as it now is and there is no one connected with the Order to whom we can all look with greater pride & respect than to Bro. McDowell. It was our salvation that he came to Washington at the time he did & he is worthy of all honor for the interest he has taken in the Order. When he shall appear in the seventh degree during the session when it will be conferred — we can all bow to him in deep reverence & do so with heartfelt pleasure.

All masonic-style organizations require a *legend* or founding myth, such as the Masons' myth of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Rosicrucian story of Christian Rosenkreutz's tomb, and the Shriners' links to the Bektashi Sufi Order of Turkey. Ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt, India (and the American "Indians"), Chaldea, Islamdom, the Druids and many other exotic sources were invoked. Scholars always assume these myths are bogus, but they may sometimes judge too hastily. For example, I believe the Bektashi-Shriner connection may be real (for reasons too twisted to get into here). As for the Grange legend, I reserve judgment but also see no reason to debunk it. However, even without a genuine "apostolic succession" from remote Antiquity, the legend remains very suggestive. Naples since the Renaissance seethed with alchemy, hermeticism, and secret societies; pagan and obsessed with magic, Evil Eyes, phallic cults (think of the murals at Pompeii), ancient Naples never died. Eighteenth century Egyptian Freemasonry had origins in southern Italy (Cagliostro), once a hotbed of Isis worship. The Eleusinian Mysteries had already been introduced into Masonry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Antoine Court de Geacutebelín, French occultist and author of *Le Mond primitif*, performed his own version of the rites at Voltaire's initiation as a Mason.<sup>7</sup>

In another unsigned paper probably by Father Kelley, we find further clues:

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last page or pages and signature are missing. Spelling errors and punctuation in original.

<sup>7</sup> See James Stevens Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2002).

The Temple of Solomon was dedicated in the year 1004 before Christ — 800 years before that time the Mysteries of Ceres were celebrated, and in 1356 B.C. they were introduced into Greece by Emolpos — where they became the most celebrated of all the religious ceremonies. History tells us that for 1800 years these Mysteries of Ceres were maintained and the Ceremonies were of the most costly and magnificent in the known world. Both sexes were admitted and of all ages & so popular did they become that it was considered a crime to neglect them. So great was the influence of the prominent officials, that the Emperor Valentinian attempted to suppress them, but he met with strong opposition, they were finally combatted by Theodosius in the year 370 A.D. and the public displays discontinued. After that they were maintained privately & by prominent supporters introduced into Italy. There the Mysteries of Vesta were the most popular and after became mingled with the forms in the Church of Rome. Somewhat modified the Mysteries of Ceres here met with favor & handed down from generation to generation after a while became almost a secret political organization, which it is claimed had much to do in curtailing the temporal power of the Pope of Rome. Its principles were strongly Republican and its ceremonies of the very highest order.

So, the mysterious Duke appears to have been an anti-papalist and man of “strong Republican principles,” perhaps a radical aristocrat, like Prince Kropotkin or Lord Fitzgerald of Ireland. If so, might he have had connections with the Italian Masonic-inspired secret society of the Carbonari? The “Charcoal-Burners” were real revolutionaries, admired even by the young Marx. In any case, most Italian Masons are anti-Pope, and most Popes are anti-Mason. (The last Pope to die at the hands of a rogue Masonic order — “Propaganda Lodge II” — was John Paul I, at least according to a rather persuasive conspiracy theory.<sup>8</sup>) The Church automatically excommunicates any Catholic who joins the Masons. The Carbonari went farther “left” and embraced anti-monarchism as well.

These suppositions about the Duke may or may not be borne out by subsequent research. In any case, when the Grange adopted the Eleusinian Mysteries as their Seventh Degree legend, they were able to consult recent scholarship and archaeology in order to flesh out their understanding of the mythic material. What exactly were the Eleusinian Mysteries?

The short answer is that no one really knows, since the initiatic vow of secrecy was (almost) never broken in Antiquity. We depend on the fulminations of early Church Fathers. But the founding myth on which the secret and very theatrical rites at Eleusis were based has never been kept secret: a strange and poetic version of “Persephone’s Quest,” her rape by Pluto, Demeter’s grief, the final resurrection, the magical link with the fertility of grain, the intimations of immortality, and so on. Consult any good source on classical mythology for details.

But the nocturnal underground ritual theater at Eleusis remains shrouded in obscurity. What “miracle” did the Priests of Demeter produce so infallibly year after year for their audiences of initiates? Philosophers found it as convincing as the simplest pilgrims. Alcibiades dared to mock the Mysteries and was overthrown and exiled. The show went on for several millenia. According to the Grange, it never ceased. Perhaps the Seventh Degree Grange ritual would shed light on the elusive mystery of Eleusis. But the Seventh Degree is secret, and I respect secrets.

One of the most radical and controversial interpretations of Eleusis was proposed by the Classicist, Carl Ruck. Following the speculations of poet Robert Graves, and in collaboration with

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<sup>8</sup> David Yallop, *In God’s Name: An Investigation into the Murder of Pope John Paul I* (London: J. Cape, 1984).

ethnomycologist Gordon Wasson, he proposed that the key to the Mysteries was a psychedelic mushroom. Before descending into the chamber of the ritual, each initiate was given a cup of the *kykion*, a drink composed of water, barley and mint. If I understand him correctly, Ruck suggests that the barley was deliberately infected with ergot fungus, the organic source of LSD. The famous discoverer of LSD, Albert Hoffman, collaborated with Wasson and Ruck and suggested a simple way to remove toxins from ergot with water, a method well within the possible bounds of ancient technology.<sup>9</sup> If the audience at Eleusis was undergoing a directed “entheogenic experience,” this would explain the awe, deep emotion, and the sense of having witnessed a miracle that informs the ancient texts despite their pious “silence” about details. (This notion was first proposed, I think, by the magician Aleister Crowley in 1913 when he tried to revive the Eleusinian Mysteries in London and dosed his audience with mescaline! Ruck, Wasson, and Hoffman, however, offer a genuine hypothesis in keeping with archaeology and ethnobotany, whereas Crowley relied on sheer imagination.)

Pardon this digression, which has nothing to do with the Grangers — temperance advocates to a man and woman. (Wine, yes. Distilled spirits, no.) The Seven Founders (and Miss Carrie Hall) found in the myth only a spiritual intoxication. For them, the most important aspects of the Eleusinian complex revolved around a) its openness to all, originally all free Greeks, and by extension all humanity; b) its literal “re-enchantment of the landscape” of agriculture, its divinizing of the farmer’s labor; and c) its feminism, manifested both as “goddess worship” and as full and equal gender participation in rites and offices.

In Masonry, women are usually excluded from initiation and membership. The Utopian Socialist, Charles Fourier, among other radical 19<sup>th</sup> century hermeticists, proposed an “Androgynous Masonry” that would erase this outdated male chauvinism and provide a new source of magical potency for masonic rites. The official lodges never accepted androgyny, but it proved to be an important key to success for the Grange.

Kelley and McDowell, if not intoxicated, certainly seem to have been elated and “empowered” (in New Age jargon) by their contact with the Mysteries. Kelley writes:

History shows that in the Temple of Ceres at Eleusis the most magnificent scenic displays & transformation scenes were produced all having the object & aim of impressing the most beautiful lessons upon the minds of the initiates — visions of the creation of the Universe — to witness the introduction of agriculture of sound laws & gentle manners which followed the steps of the Goddess Ceres to recognize the immortality of the Soul as typified by the concealment of corn planted in the Earth, by its revival in the green blades.

The initiates were taken to the Vestibule of the Temple & there arrayed in the Sacred fawn skin. From this it was intended to make our regalia, and the first regular regalia ever made from the National Grange was this one I now wear. But when we took into consideration the terrible slaughter of Fawns that would be necessary to furnish the entire order we decided upon the kind after adopted at the suggestion of Brothers McDowell & Thompson. The nankeen was the nearest to resemble the dressed fawn skin.

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<sup>9</sup> R. Gordon Wasson, Stella Kramrisch, Carl Ruck, and Jonathan Ott, *Persephone’s Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

When we consider that the mysteries was the oldest organization founded upon the cultivation of the soil & in which woman was admitted upon an equality with man & no other secret agricultural society having existed since until the Grange was introduced, we can claim to be fortunate in making the connecting link by Bro. McDowell —<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*

## IV.

Some curious weeds I might mention  
That lend to the landscape no charm;  
To one let me call your attention,  
Keep politics off your farm.  
Tho' weeds will with politics mingle,  
Potatoes with politics fail;  
Devote your whole mind to your business,  
And make ev'ry effort avail.

(Chorus)

Keep politics off your farm (your farm),  
Your crops they will certainly harm (will harm);  
If you would successfully labor,  
Keep politics off your farm.

— C.E. Pollock, "Keep Politics Off  
Your Farm, *Grange Melodies*

How radical was the Grange?

As an organization, the Patrons of Husbandry formally eschewed politics and religion — but the political implications of its tenets were obvious, and most Grangers followed them to logical conclusions. Populism in general cannot be called "revolutionary," since it proposed neither overthrow of the state nor the abolition of capital. Perhaps Populism should be compared with the Social Democratic movement of Europe rather than with communism or anarchism.

Nevertheless, Populism's enemies certainly saw it as socialistic, and in newspaper cartoons of the period, the Grangers are depicted running wild in tandem with anarchists and other undesirables. I don't know if any anarchists supported or joined the Grange, but I've also never seen any anarchist denunciations of the Grange. Some anarchists and libertarian socialists have sometimes practiced some sort of "united front" politics with other radical forces. The Populist *moment* seems to have been so uplifting, inspired and urgent, so optimistic (even naïf) in its anticipation of universal reform that it no doubt attracted and absorbed energies from both left and right. Some especially ungenerous historians go so far as to interpret Populism as a "prelude to fascism"; in my view, the racist and authoritarian aspects of later Populism constitute a contamination rather than an essence.

In effect, the most "anarchistic" aspect of the Grange manifests precisely in its avoidance of *legislative* politics and *organized* religion. In this it seems to harmonize somewhat with the Transcendentalist/Individualist wing of American anarchism — Thoreau, Emerson, Josiah Warren, and S. Pearl Andrews. And the very idea of an agricultural cult is quite reminiscent of Fourier and his disciples at Brook Farm. (The word "Association" appears rather often in Grange literature;



it was a Fourierist key-term, introduced to American radicals by A. Brisbane and the “utopian socialists,” a generation before the Grange appeared.)

The Grange can certainly be seen as part of the great 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century movement of cooperation, whereby the real producers of value (e.g., farmers and workers) can eliminate parasitic capitalists and middlemen by organizing voluntarily, as producers and/or consumers, and pooling their energies and resources. After a few rocky starts and even disasters, the Grange settled on the English “Rochedale System” and experienced real success with many cooperative ventures in grain merchandizing, purchase of farm equipment, etc.<sup>1</sup> Of course, like all cooperative ventures in competition with capitalism, such voluntary associations can always be undersold and ruined by “combinations” or even simply by rival companies with more capital. Given the chance, coops nearly always succeed — at least at first. In the “war to the knife” of the free market, however, coops always seem to lose in the end.

Given its premises, the Grange logically supported state control and regulation of economic activity — i.e., a kind of socialism. On one level, Populism can be seen as the culmination of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s struggle between the people and the corporations. Although most state legislatures are supposed to have the power to grant, refuse, or revoke corporate charters, in practice, the corporations have literally bought and paid for very dubious legislation, such as the amazing legal miracle — one might even call it “Mystery” — of the “fictitious person,” the corporate body with more rights but far fewer liabilities than mere flesh-and-blood humans. This process was well underway by the “gilded” post-Civil War era of trusts, monopolies, the railroad, ravenous bankers and financiers, and the railroads — the powers arrayed above the heads of American farmers and workers: the “Octopus.”

In the end, as we know, the corporations won. But the Grange at least gave them a run for their money. The story of the “Granger Laws,” the many attempts to regulate the railroads, and the ultimate defeat — if all else failed, the railroads simply declared bankruptcy and vanished — is too complex to detain us here. I only want to emphasize the *style* of the Grange, which might justly be called *agrarian-social militancy*.

Little by little, Grangers were drawn into the ferment of Populist politics:

So many political meetings were held on Independence Day in 1873 that it was referred to as the “Farmers’ Fourth of July.” This had always been the greatest day of the farmer’s year, for it meant the opportunity for social and intellectual enjoyment in the picnics and celebrations which brought neighbors together in hilarious good-fellowship. In 1873, however, the gatherings took on unwonted seriousness. The accustomed spread-eagle oratory gave place to impassioned denunciation of corporations and to the solemn reading of a *Farmers’ Declaration of Independence*. “When, in the course of human events,” this document begins in words familiar to every schoolboy orator, “it becomes necessary for a class of the people, suffering from long continued systems of oppression and abuse, to rouse themselves from an apathetic indifference to their own interests, which has become habitual ... a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to a course so necessary to their own protection.” Then comes a statement of “self-evident truths,” a catalogue of the sins of the railroads, a denunciation

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<sup>1</sup> Founded 1844 in Rochedale by English weavers under the influence of Robert Owen. It really worked, unlike

of railroads and Congress for not having redressed these wrongs, and finally the conclusion:

We, therefore, the producers of the state in our several counties assembled ... do so solemnly declare that we will use all lawful and peaceable means to free ourselves from the tyranny of monopoly, and that we will never cease our efforts for reform until every department of our Government gives token that the reign of licentious extravagance is over, and something of the purity, honesty, and frugality with which our fathers inaugurated it, has taken its place.

That to this end we hereby declare ourselves absolutely free and independent of all past political connections, and that we will give our suffrage only to such men for office, as we have good reason to believe will use their best endeavors to the promotion of these ends; and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.<sup>2</sup>

If only the Grange had adhered strictly to its original non-political forms of organization — economic self-management, voluntary association, etc. — it might have been spared the fate of collapsing along with the Populist political movement. Every radical “third force” in American history that falls for the lure of party politics ends the same way. (The Libertarian Party and the Green Party seem to be the latest of these paper tigers.) Genuinely radical possibilities are buried under the rubric (and rubble) of “practical goals” (i.e., tepid reforms), economic organization abandoned for third-party futilitarianism, cooptation, and eventual suppression. The feather-brained Democrat, W.J. Bryan, promised the Populists that their cause would never be “crucified on a cross of gold”; instead it was crucified on a cross of silver. The anti-racist, feminist and socialist promise of Populism collapsed, and the movement devolved toward the eventual demagoguery of a Huey Long. Leftwing remnants moved on into other forms of organization and resistance — also eventually crushed by World War I and the “Red Scare” of 1919–20.

For the Grange a collapse had begun as early as 1874 (the year after the “Declaration” and the entry into politics), and by 1880 the number of active Granges had shrunk from about 20,000 to 4,000. Cooperative failures and electoral failures can be blamed even more than organizational problems, such as too-rapid expansion and infighting. When the Grange began to achieve results with the Rochdale System, the collapse was contained and the order survived. But its heady days of rebelliousness receded into a lost past.

The independent American farm — the old Jeffersonian ideal — began to appear doomed. The Great Depression marked a new low point for the family farm. Just like any other industry, agribusiness depends for its triumph on the elimination of competition. The number of independent farmers seems now to have fallen to a point where political and economic power becomes impossible. The “farm lobby” represents the multinational agribusiness corporations, not Mom and Pop. Where I live in the Hudson Valley, I hear a lot of pro-farming rhetoric from politicians. But in the real estate sections of newspapers and magazines, I see apple farms — “ideal for development” — vanishing every day. How is one to conceive of a resistance against such conditions?

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other Owenite ideas; its principles still form the basis for many contemporary Cooperative systems.

<sup>2</sup> Solon Justus Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (Washington, DC: Ross and Perry, 2003 [1913]).

In 1874, its year of greatest power, the Grange held a convention in St. Louis and proclaimed a "Declaration of Purposes." Among other planks, this document endorsed the motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." By odd coincidence, this also happens to have been the motto of Stephen Pearl Andrews.

S. Pearl Andrews (1812–1886) embraced every Reform cause of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: abolitionism, free love, women's rights, phrenology, individualist anarchism, spiritualism, you name it. With Josiah Warren he founded the marvelous and amorous commune "Modern Times" in Brentwood, Long Island, and he edited a newspaper for Victoria Woodhull ("Mrs. Satan"), spirit-medium, stock broker, Free Lover, and the first woman to run for President of the United States. Andrews believed himself a synthesis of Fourier, Swedenborg and Bakunin. He created his own science, "Universology," his own political system, "Pantarchy," his own church, and even his own language.<sup>3</sup> Andrew's version of the motto was: "In things proven, Unity; in whatsoever can be doubted, Free Diversity; in things not touching upon others' rights, Liberty; in all things, Charity." Perhaps an anarchist strain can, after all, be detected in the radical heritage of the Grange.

Some while ago, I accompanied my friend, local beekeeper Chris Harp, who had been invited to address a nearby Grange. The hall was decrepit but beautiful; the Grangers (including a Ceres and a Pomona) were ancient and none-too-prosperous looking but warmly hospitable; babies and toddlers symbolized future hopes; hot dogs, cake and coffee were served. When Chris began describing the plight of the honeybee in today's polluted, overdeveloped countryside, the senior Grangers all nodded knowingly. One toothless old character thumped the arm of his chair and said, "That's capitalism!"

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<sup>3</sup> See my biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 250, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Gale Group, 2002).

## V.

The gas-lighted hall with its pleasures,  
He dreams of, and longs to be there;  
And heedless of trouble and labor,  
He hitherward seems to repair.  
“How stupid a life in the country,  
The city has many a charm!”  
My boy, from your reverie waken,  
'Tis better to stay on the farm.

— J.H. Tenney, “Tis Better  
To Stay On The Farm,”  
*Grange Melodies*

None of the issues that once agitated the Grange have ever been resolved — not one. They’ve simply changed their outward forms. Some of them were mitigated, or at least held in check, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, although the U.S. preached free-market capitalism, it still practiced protectionism, because it had to. The inherent contradictions of American agriculture (like many other problems) were suppressed by Keynesian government spending, the New Deal, and post-WWII prosperity.

With the triumph of global capital and neoliberalism at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the old problems and contradictions were suddenly once again revealed and even exacerbated. To speak of the agricultural crisis is to speak of an ecological/environmental crisis that threatens all life, not merely vegetables or cows. To mention only one new form of an old problem: the Grange campaigned against unfair patent laws that gave patent-holding monopolies the oppressive “right” to set unfair prices on farm machinery and other socially necessary resources. Nowadays the issue reappears as “intellectual property,” as agribusiness megacorporations like Monsanto buy up the “rights” to natural plant-DNA, eradicate biodiversity, fix prices and standards, patent genetically modified (GM) crops and “terminator seeds,” fertilizers, pesticides, and so on. The old-time Grangers had already diagnosed the essential principle: knowledge is a social good, not a commodity. But their struggle failed, and we’ve inherited all the original muck plus a century of vile accretions.

The struggles over privatization of land, water and air; the Green movement and the ecological struggle; the battle against genetic prometheanism and “frankenfoods”; the anti-globalization movement and its call for local autonomy and economic justice; the uprisings against neoliberalism (the new mask of the old-time Mammon-capitalism) spreading throughout Latin America; the growing movement to disempower the bloated multinationals — these are all variations on the old causes of the Grange.

The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other “global” treaties and institutions have to some extent superseded the old nation-states as the

primary powers behind the new oppression. The U.S. empire acts as a hegemon for this illusory “free market,” dispensing corporate welfare and waging war on behalf of Big Oil and at times, Big Agriculture, leading the onslaught against the global environment, and dumbing down the world with its viral consumerist disinfotainment industry. In the great neoliberal, neocon mall that constitutes late — or too-late — capitalism, the U.S. has appointed itself both CEO and security cop. It may be a New World Order, but it’s the same old Octopus of trusts, monopolies, and state power.

All the planks in the old Grange platform could simply be repainted and spruced up with trendy vocabulary to serve as groundwork for a new agrarian radical movement. For instance, to speak locally, the utter devastation facing our independent apple farmers owes much of its genesis to “free” global economics. Not only is the U.S. apple lobby controlled by northwest Pacific area agribusiness, but even the megafarms there are being ruined by cheap Chinese apple juice concentrate dumped on the world market in vast quantities. Any 19<sup>th</sup> century Granger could have analyzed this situation in two minutes.

On a very small scale some positive actions are being taken to create a real alternative to the utter demise of agriculture. In the organic farm movement — already in danger from agribusiness, which has scented a “market niche” — CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms are sprouting up all over our region. CSAs connect people, who sign up as members, with the source of their food, since members pay the farmer up front for a season of produce. Even a few genuine food co-ops do a lively trade in local and organic produce. “Seed Savers” and other movements have appeared to protect biodiversity and popularize tasty old strains and plant varieties. Herbalism offers a source of income for gardeners and wildcrafters. Permaculture and other sustainability systems are gradually gaining recognition. Guerilla gardens are springing up even in urban wastelands. But the question remains: does all this amount to real resistance?

In Europe, where there are heroes and martyrs like Reneacute Riessel and Joseacute Boveacute serving hard time for attacks on McDonald’s and GM crops, yes. Europe even has a “Slow Food” movement. And yes, struggle thrives also in India, where mass movements are organized around some of these issues to provide resistance against the so-called Green Revolution, GM seeds, dams, forest destruction, and other measures that are destroying traditional agriculture, and with it, the peasantry itself.

In America the answer is not so clear. In America the activists are mostly Earth First!-type militants and wilderness defenders. By contrast, the new forms of agriculture sometimes seem like hobbies for well-meaning (and well-off) do-gooders rather than radical praxis for agrarian rebels. Where is the modern Grange that could provide both an ancient tradition of militancy along with a real appreciation of the contemporary Green position in today’s terms and vocabulary? Where is the movement to embrace all independent farmers and gardeners as part of a larger movement for a “sacred Earth” and economic justice? Or is this just an idle dream?

## VI.

Scholars of prehistory used to speak of the “neolithic agricultural revolution.” Nowadays the term “revolution” is not much used in reference to the introduction of agriculture, since in fact, the “appearance” of agriculture stretched over a few thousand years. Moreover, it wasn’t really agriculture, but horticulture — gardening.

Historians also used to assume that agriculture represented “progress” in relation to the million-year human economy of hunting and gathering. In the 1960s, however, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins turned this notion upside down when he demonstrated that hunter/gatherers were the “original leisure society,” “working” on average three or four hours a day and enjoying an average of 200-odd different food items.<sup>1</sup> Primitive agriculturalists, by contrast, worked twelve to fourteen hours a day and got by on twenty or so foodstuffs. Hunters spent vast amounts of time napping, dancing, making love, or getting high. “Advanced civilization” doesn’t appear magically with the new agricultural technology. Gardeners are self-sufficient no more; yet Sumer and Egypt were still 10,000 years away.

In this context, the *reason* for agriculture suddenly becomes very mysterious. Why give up the good life of hunting for the brow-beating labor of farming? The “neolithic revolution” now looks more like a fall from grace — from Golden Age or Eden into the curse of Cain, work and war. Sahlins himself never said this, but many of his readers believed it, since it chimed nicely with 60s radicalism and “zero-work” rebelliousness.

In subsequent years, however, I came to reconsider this critique of agriculture in light of the work and writings of botano-historians like N. Vavilov and Carl O. Sauer and archeologists like Marija Gimbutas. Sahlins and his school still seem relevant, but a more nuanced picture emerges.<sup>2</sup>

Nomadic hunter/gatherers usually move in an annual round within a given territory, returning to the same camps at the same seasons. Men hunted and women gathered, more or less. Seeds of favored plants would fall around the campsite into disturbed soil enriched by garbage and feces. Next year when the band returned, they found their favorite plants waiting for them, as if the plants had followed them and loved them as much as they loved the plants. The first gardens appeared in an intense erotic aura, realized in the universal figure of the Earth Goddess and her many avatars. As gardening thus took on more and more meaning, women came to play a greater role in the tribe.

The first gardenstuffs, or “cultivars,” were all luxuries, not necessities. In the old world, in South Central Asia, the first cultivars seem to have been barley (for beer), grapes (for wine), and hemp (for intoxication). In the New World, the earliest cultivar was tobacco. Gardening may involve hard work, but its origin was in love, its end in sheer pleasure. No wonder it proved popular and began to spread, most likely through “Women’s Mysteries” and shamanic secret societies.

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldin Atherton, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> On N.I. Vavilov, see references in the bibliography in Hakim Bey and Abel Zug (eds.), *Orgies of the Hemp Eaters: Cuisine, Slang, Literature & Ritual of the Cannabis Culture* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004); and Frank Browning, *Apples*

Neolithic gardening/hunting humans organized themselves into small villages of “free peasants.” They preserved and maintained the old rights and customs of the hunters: rough egalitarianism (no “classes”), no leaders (only elders and specialists), a “gift economy” and a shamanistic spirituality, with a new emphasis on earth goddess mysteries and the calendrical cycle. Eventually they managed to produce a surplus, largely of stored grain, which became their communal wealth. The village temple served as a center for redistribution. Everyone received a fair share, more or less. In Mesopotamia, the villagers even began to experiment with small-scale irrigation.

Then around the Fourth Millennium, something suddenly went drastically wrong with this harmonious polity. Was it the discovery of metallurgy and new weapons technology? A revolt of the warriors or of bad shamans against ancient egalitarian folkways? Or even a revolt of men against women? In any case, it happened with the swiftness of revolution (or coup d’état): the sudden emergence of the state.

The essential act of the state was to seize control of the surplus on behalf of an elite who, from then on, would concern themselves not with work but war: the new form of war, source of booty and slaves. The rest of the tribe was reduced to the status of peons. The earliest dynasties of Sumer and Egypt indulged in paroxysms of cruelty, hecatombs of human sacrifice, self-glorifying architecture, and a new temple ideology of war gods and divine kings. Land was no longer a “commons” but was divided into property, most of it belonging to the temple and palace. The disappearance of the commons proved to be a long drawn out process. Here and there some scraps of socially owned land may still survive even today, as yet overlooked by the forces of privatization. But the problem *began* in Sumer in about 4000 BCE. By the time of Gilgamesh (an actual historical figure), few humans farmed for themselves and their community; most farmed for the Man, the ruler and owner. Naturally, resentment and rebellion ensued, and memory traces of the turmoil linger in the old myths. Civilization — and its discontents — arose from the violent appropriation of the agricultural surplus.

From this “fall” many other miseries arose — at least for the majority of humans. The usurping minority recreated for itself all the old leisure and freedom of the hunters — in fact, they spent their leisure hunting and monopolized hunting, the “sport of kings,” and punished all poachers. Stealing the king’s game must be one of the very oldest forms of radical resistance. Many others soon followed.

Charles Fourier believed that civilization was based on agriculture, and that civilization was a tragic mistake. He was, of course, defining agriculture as alienated labor. Humans should have progressed directly from horticulture to utopia (or “harmony” as Fourier called it); and the husbandry of the utopian future would consist of complex horticulture practiced by voluntary associations of community-dwelling “gastrosophists” (gourmet philosophers) devoted to pleasure and luxury for *all*, not for a tyrannical few. Fourier’s odd and poetic notions found many enthusiastic followers in America, and he was also considered a seminal figure in the Cooperative movement.

Agrarian radicalism might be seen as a deeply conservative concept based on shared culture memories (perhaps unconscious) of the Neolithic polity of free peasant horticulturalists. The image of the neolithic certainly survives in folktales and myths, from Hesiod’s Hyperborea to the “Big Rock Candy Mountain.” The free peasant village form seems to be so natural that it reappears spontaneously wherever and whenever it can. William Morris and other socialists admired the

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(New York: North Point, 1998) for Vavilov’s work on the origin of apples and his (fatal) disagreement with Lysenko and Stalin.

European Middle Ages, not for their feudalism but for their craft guilds and peasant communes. The ancient Russian *Mir*, or free peasant commune, inspired many radical thinkers — Kropotkin, Herzen, the Narodniks, the Mystical Anarchists, Gustav Landauer, and even Marx (otherwise a fierce Russophobe).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the Imperialist era, radical agrarian ideas spread to colonies where the economy still depended on peasant labor. These ideas invariably resonated with ancient folkways and local myths of resistance and freedom. In Mexico, for example, agrarian radicalism melded with indigenous and mestizo culture in interesting ways. The anarchist Magon Brothers (who ironically operated as the “Mexican Liberal Party”) popularized the slogan *Tierra y Libertad* — almost a three-word definition of agrarian radicalism. Zapata took the message to the people, and in 1994, the whole tradition, now with a strong Mayan input, re-emerged in Chiapas as the EZLN. The Zapatistas were the honorable first to declare war on global capital and neoliberalism — either desperate fools or prophetic heroes.

Looking at the “long duration” of the history of agriculture, the Grange seems to fit with many of the themes outlined above, and even to offer a “proof-text” for some of them. The impulse to rediscover a “sacred” dimension in farming, with the inevitable reappearance of the Goddess, strikes a chord of recognition that vibrates back to the neolithic. Nineteenth century American farmers were not peasants in any strict sense of the term and cherished no specific image of a “commons,” no specific tradition of non-authoritarian self-management such as the *Mir*. But the rank injustice they experienced plus the exuberance of their imagination conspired to awaken in them archaic forms of mythic desire — for autonomy, conviviality, mystery and pleasure — for the return of the Goddess.



## VII.

1. You may talk of all the nobles of the earth,  
Of the kings who hold the nations in their thrall,  
Yet in this we all agree, if we only look and see,  
That the farmer is the man that feeds us all.  
2. There's the President ...  
3. There are Governors and legislators ...  
4. There are speculators ...  
5. Then the preacher ... lawyer ... doctor ...  
Tailor ... smith ...  
6. Now the Patrons true are coming to the fight.  
7. From the rising to the setting of the sun,  
Great monopolies are surely doomed to fall;  
Then onward in the fight, and we'll battle for the right,  
While the farmer is the man that feeds us all.  
— Knowles Shaw, "The Farmer Feeds Us All,"  
*Grange Melodies*

The title of this essay has a double meaning. First, I wanted to try to describe the appeal of the Grange, its colorful history of radicalism and mysticism. I find that very few educated Americans have even heard of the Grange, much less its significance. I hope I've managed at least a brief sketch of the inspiring importance of this history for contemporary Green theory and praxis.

However, since the Grange still exists, I also intended an appeal *to* the Grange. With all due humility and deference as an outsider, I'd like to point out that some movement very much like the Grange will undoubtedly emerge to offer some coherence to the struggles of the new agriculture, in all its myriad forms, against the *antibiosis* and oppression of the megacorporations. True, the appropriation of the surplus has reached the point where five or six behemoths own and control 90 percent of the world's food. But the 6,000-year resistance is still not ended and cannot end until the last grain of wheat is dead.

If a Grange-like movement is thus demanded by history (assuming we haven't already reached the end of history, as the corporate globalists proclaim), then perhaps it could be... the Grange.

Two different worlds would have to unite to create a new and militant Grange — but those two worlds have a great deal in common. The same forces are crushing peasants in India and the last few family farms in America. The Zapatistas and the urban gardeners of New York City's Lower East Side are ultimately on the same side as the independent farmers — the side of life, of *biophilia*, of love of life.

Well, it's a nice thought. If Populism is going to be reborn in America, then the question of politics arises, though this is not a political essay. Instead it merely wants to establish the general principle that the radical Green agenda has deep roots; it has ancestors, precursors, patron saints.

It has tradition — “that which is handed down.” Old principles can be creatively adapted and applied to new situations.

Terms like “Gaia Hypothesis” and “biophilia” are not sentimental or poetic devices, nor political slogans. They might perhaps be called scientific mysteries. (In fact, both terms were coined by scientists.) That the earth is alive and in love with life may be true but unprovable, like certain axioms in mathematics. Precisely here mysteries can become Mysteries. Hermeticism is perhaps a science of the unprovable, and it is based on the axiom that the earth is not only alive but in some sense sacred. Long before modern neo-pagans began worshipping Nature, the cult of the goddess was already reborn, as it always will be — but this time in the hearts of hardworking Temperance/Protestant American farm families. A strange moment in radical history, to be sure — this birth of Green Spirituality.

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Peter Lamborn Wilson  
Grange Appeal  
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# Endarkenment Manifesto

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At least half the year belongs to Endarkenment. Enlightenment is only a special case of Endarkenment—and it has nights of its own.

During the day democracy waxes, indiscriminately illuminating all and sundry. But shadowless noon belongs to Pan. And night imposes a “radical aristocracy” in which things shine solely by their own luminescence, or not at all.

Obfuscatory, reactionary and superstitious, Endarkenment offers jobs for trolls and sylphs, witches and warlocks. Perhaps only superstition can re-enchant Nature. People who fear and desire nymphs and fauns will think twice before polluting streams or clear-cutting forests.

Electricity banished shadows—but shadows are “shades,” souls, the souls of light itself. Even divine light, when it loses its organic and secret darkness, becomes a form of pollution. In prison cells electric lights are never doused; light becomes oppression and source of disease.

Superstitions may be untrue but based on deeper truth—that earth is a living being. Science may be true, i.e. effective, while based on a deeper untruth—that matter is dead.

The peasants attacking Dr. Frankenstein’s tower with their torches and scythes were the shock troops of Endarkenment, our luddite militia. The original historical Luddites smashed mechanical looms, ancestors of the computer.

“Neolithic conservatism” (Paul Goodman’s definition of anarchism) positions itself outside the ponderous inevitability of separation and sameness. Every caveman a Prince Kropotkin, every cavewoman Mrs. Nietzsche. Our Phalanstery would be lit by candles and our Passions avowed via messenger pigeons and hot-air balloons.

Imagine what science might be like to day if the State and Kapital had never emerged. Romantic Science proposes an empiricism devoid of disastrous splits between consciousness and Nature; thus it prolongates Neolithic alchemy as if separation and alienation had never occurred: science for life not money, health not war, pleasure not efficiency; Novalis’s “poeticization of science.”

Of course technology itself is haunted—a ghost for every machine. The myth of Progress stars its own cast of ghouls and efreet. Consciously or unconsciously (what difference would it make?) we all know we live in techno-dystopia, but we accept it with the deterministic fatalism of beaten serfs, as if it were virtual Natural Law.

Technology mimics and thus belittles the miracles of magic. Rationalism has its own Popes and droning litanies, but the spell they cast is one of disenchantment. Or rather: all magic has

migrated into money, all power into a technology of titanic totality, a violence against life that stuns and disheartens.

Hence the universal fear/desire for the End of the World (or for some world anyway). For the poor Christian Moslem Jewish saps duped by fundamentalist nihilism the Last Day is both horror-show and Rapture, just as for secular Yuppies global warming is a symbol of terror and meaninglessness and simultaneously a rapturous vision of post-Catastrophe Hobbit-like local-sustainable solar-powered *gemutlichkeit*. Thus the technopathocracy comes equipped with its own built-in escape-valve fantasy: the Ragnarok of technology itself and the sudden catastrophic restoration of meaning. In fact Capital can capitalize on its own huge unpopularity by commoditizing hope for its End. That's what the smug shits call a win/win situation.

Winter Solstice (Chaos Day in Chinese folklore) is one of Endarkenment's official holidays, along with Samhain or Halloween, Winter's first day.

Endarkenment stands socially for the Cro-Magnon or "Atlantaeon" complex—anarchist because prior to the State—for horticulture and gathering against agriculture and industry—for the right to hunt as against the usurpation of commons by lord or State. Electricity and internal combustion should be turned off along with all States and corporations and their cult of Mammon and Moloch.

Despite our ultimate aim we're willing to step back bit by bit. We might be willing to accept steam power or hydraulics. The last agreeable year for us was 1941, the ideal is about 10,000 BC, but we're not purists. Endarkenment is a form of impurism, of mixture and shadow.

Endarkenment envisages a medicine advanced as it might have been if money and the State had never appeared, medicine for earth, animals and humans, based on Nature, not on promethean technology. Endarkenment is not impressed by medicine that prolongs "life span" by adding several years in a hospital bed hooked up to tubes and glued to daytime TV, all at the expense of every penny ever saved by the patient (lit. "sufferer") plus huge debts for children and heirs. We're not impressed by gene therapy and plastic surgery for obscene superrich post humans. We prefer an empirical extension of "medieval superstitions" of Old Wives and herbalists, a rectified Paracelsan peoples' medicine as proposed by Ivan Illich in his book on demedicalization of society. (Illich as Catholic anarchist we consider an Endarkenment saint of some sort.) (Endarkenment is somewhat like "Tory anarchism," a phrase I've seen used earliest in Max Beehbohm and most lately by John Mitchell.) (Other saints: William Blake, William Morris, A.K. Coomaraswamy, John Cowper Powys, Marie Laveau, King Farouk...)

Politically Endarkenment proposes anarcho-monarchism, in effect somewhat like Scandinavian monarcho-socialism but more radical, with highly symbolic but powerless monarchs and lots of good ritual, combined with Proudhonian anarcho-federalism and Mutualism. Georges Sorel (author of *Reflections on Violence*) had some anarcho-monarchist disciples in the Cercle Proudhon (1910–1914) with whom we feel a certain affinity. Endarkenment favors most separatisms and secessions; many small states are better than a few big ones. We're especially interested in the break-up of the American Empire.

Endarkenment also feels some critical admiration for Col. Qadhafi's Green Book, and for the Bonnot Gang (Stirnerite Nietzschean bank robbers). In Islamdom it favors "medieval accretions" like sufism and Ismailism against all crypto-modernist hyperorthodoxy and politics of resentment. We also admire the martyred Iranian Shiite/Sufi socialist Ali Shariati, who was praised by Massignon and Foucault.

Culturally Endarkenment aims at extreme neo-Romanticism and will therefore be accused of fascism by its enemies on the Left. The answer to this is that (1) we're anarchists and federalists adamantly opposed to all authoritarian centralisms whether Left or Right. (2) We favor all races, we love both difference and solidarity, not sameness and separation. (3) We reject the myth of Progress and technology—all cultural Futurism—all plans no matter their ideological origin—all uniformity—all conformity whether to organized religion or secular rationalism with its market democracy and endless war.

Endarkenists "believe in magic" and so must wage their guerrilla through magic rather than compete with the State's monopoly of techno-violence. Giordano Bruno's Image Magic is our secret weapon. Projective hieroglyphic hermeneutics. Action at a distance through manipulation of symbols carried out dramaturgically via acts of Poetic Terrorism, surrealist sabotage, Bakunin's "creative destruction"—but also destructive creativity, invention of hermetico-critical objects, hieroglyphic projections of word/image "spells"—by which more is meant (always) than mere "political art"—rather a magical art with actual dire or beneficial results. Our enemies on the Right might call this political pornography and they'd be (as usual) right. Porn has a measurable physiopsychological effect. We're looking for something like it, definitely, only bigger, and more like Artaud than Brecht—but not to be mistaken for "Absolute Art" or any other platonic purism—rather an empirical strategic "situationist" art, outside all mass media, truly underground, as befits Endarkenment, like a loosely structured "rhizomatic" Tong or freemasonic conspiracy.

The Dark has its own lights or "photisms" as Henry Corbin called them, literally as entoptic/hypnagogic phosphene-like phenomena, and figuratively (or imaginally) as Paracelsan Nature spirits, or in Blakean terms, inner lights. Enlightenment has its shadows, Endarkenment has its Illuminati; and there are no ideas but in persons (in theologic terms, angels). According to legend the Byzantines were busy discussing "the sex of angels" while the Ottomans were besieging the walls of Constantinople. Was this the height of Endarkenment? We share that obsession.

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